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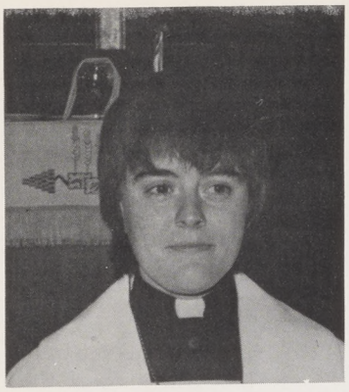
In Unity

JUNE – JULY 1978

"All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to God and gave us the ministry of reconciliation . . .

. . . .We beseech you . . .be reconciled to God.

II Corinthians 5:18-20



An Elder's Message: ...a personal viewpoint...

"What's happening in this Fellowship? *You* tell me, from *your* perspective. I hear all these rumors and stories about ministers and members leaving the church and I get worried. What *is* going on?" Not quite a verbal transcript, but more than just a resemblance of the calls and letters that I've received in the last few months.

What's happening? A lot, but before I can answer that one, some background. . .

I believe that persons are created in the image of God and that they are never fully aware of their potential for meaningfulness, purpose or peace of mind until they find a way of living in union with God. I believe that they are created to share in the divine Spirit which is God, which is perfect happiness and fulfillment and peace. And, I believe that they are created to do so by choice and not by force, in keeping with an understanding of human nature which tells us that even the best of circumstances when forced upon us becomes the worst. Rather than forced compliance, God has said to us, 'I will come to you, since you are not able to come to me, for I want you to share the wholeness and glory that is mine.'

Now, that's quite a contrast to the traditional picture of God that we've been universally exposed to. Except in isolated instances, when we really talk with people about their images of God we find that even when a loving and good God is talked about, that description is for others. The individual perceives for him/herself, looming just beneath the surface, a God who is the ultimate ogre, one who thwarts our individual strivings for happiness by imposing a magical manipulation of our lives.

It just isn't so! That's a false picture of God. Throughout the centuries, God has not been content that people should be given false pictures of God and has consistently set apart people who have perceived a part of the nature of God and who could say, 'Wait a minute world, you've missed the point! God is not like that ! Except for a very few, the images of God that you've been shown have constricted and limited God to our own human nature, abilities and perceptions. Your images of God should instead be opening and revealing and widening your understandings of human nature's abilities and perceptions.'

People like Augustine, Francis, Luther and many more—and now you and I—have been given the opportunity to go beyond the bad name that God has been given by perversions of God's message and glimpse the total love and joy that really is God. That will be hard to do, for there are many forces to overcome. History shows us that there are social pressures both within and without the church that make it more difficult for us to really live in union with God. Indeed, within each individual there are the same tensions and doubts and fears.

The ministry that we have been offered is a reconciling one, a re-uniting one, a ministry that seeks to re-unite people with God, their Creator, Savior, Sustainer. But we can't really reconcile or re-unite people with a God whose basic nature is misunderstood by them. The Christian Church, except for isolated instances, has done more to present a false image of God to people than has any other institution in history.

In working with that distorted image of God, the dedicated laity and clergy throughout history have found themselves immersed in a mire of frustration and heartache and disappointment and ultimately a feeling of futility and dispair. They experienced these things because, in spite of their dedicated labors, people were not responding to God. The people's lack of response was due to the teacher's use of images of God that had been handed down to them and inadvertently constricted and mis-shapen, instead of pausing to be near enough to God to let the God of love reveal that nature to them. Any time we portray a human tradition instead of a divine revelation of God's nature, tensions will result in our work. That spark of divinity in people, that piece of the image of God in which people were created, will enable them to reject our false images of God even though they may not often understand why.

It's like trying to sweet talk someone into cuddling up with a porcupine! No matter how hard they try, no matter how hard they want to believe you, no matter how hard you want to believe it, it's really hard to relax and be with God if you're waiting to get jabbed with a quill!

We can not reconcile people to God if we persist in using the old and worn out "ogre" images of God. We can not reconcile and re-unite a broken world with God until we can learn to relax and know that we will be loved and cuddled and cared for by God whose nature is love. We must really know, from the depths of our being, that God does not lie in wait for the chance to get us back for something. God waits patiently to hold us and say, 'Welcome back—I want you to know that I love you very much'.

We live reconciliation. We are a people of love, and not of duty.

You are called to stand as examples of people who live in vital relationship to that God. People who can stand in that relationship with God so that God's spirit may have a identifiable group through which the nature, love and power of God might be made know is required, and you are given the opportunity to be that people.

People who stand in union with God do not frighten or threaten others in an effort to point them toward God. They go first, as examples. Perceiving the wisdom of that relationship, others follow.

How can we be this kind of example? By first realizing that we can not really love God just from a sense of duty. We can not really love God by simply realizing that we should! We can not really love a God who we do not trust or respect, and there is no trust if we are expecting any moment to finally push God to the point of anger that will result in our being zapped by the perverbial lightening bolt.

In bridging this feeling I believe that it is helpful for us to realize that God does not react in anger when we do not respond to God as we should. I submit instead that God is hurt. I believe that you can hurt God's feelings just as you can hurt another's feelings by rejecting love and looking for an ulterior motive or price tag instead. Just as Christ wept over Jerusalem, God also weeps over us saying, 'How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, but you would not.'

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EDITOR'S NOTE:

The *Gay Christian* is not included in this issue since its publication within *In Unity* is contingent upon our receiving it by presstime. The office of *In Unity* has received no copy from the *Gay Christian* for four months, and will resume publication when we receive copy.

Included in the next issue of *In Unity* will be an article on the Fellowship's Field Office in Washington, D.C.

With the shipment of this issue was a questionnaire on your impressions of *In Unity*: what, if anything, it means to you; what you like or dislike in it; what else you would like to see included in its pages, etc. The Fellowship is reevaluating its communications needs, and your responses will help us clarify and meet your needs. †

...arson, arson everywhere...

Editor's note: This is the second of two articles on the increasing problem of arson and "fires of an undetermined origin" against Fellowship buildings.

For this article the Rev. Elders Troy Perry and Jim Sandmire were interviewed on the implications of violence in this society against the Fellowship. The article was written by In Unity interim editor Karen Davis, a Los Angeles area journalist.

In the short space of five years, 12 churches out of the Fellowship's 121 congregations have had their buildings either seriously vandalized or totally destroyed by fire.

Twelve churches out of 121 congregations -- that's 10 percent, the biblical tithe and portion to be given back to God. . . . The costs of those actions against the Fellowship, as high as they have been in property losses, are insignificant when compared to the cost in human lives: in one of these fires eleven church members and their pastor died in the flames.

Is all of this a coincidence, or is our culture bent on a purging mission? And what will happen if the Fellowship does not quietly take the hint? In other words, in what direction is the Fellowship moving, and what does it all mean?

****

TROY: "Fire is a definite sympton of homophobia. A lot of people want to return to "the good ol' days". The burnings (of Fellowship buildings) only started when people started taking us seriously. It was one thing to hate homosexuals that didn't own property . . . but, now they're here, and here to stay, because they own property.

"We need to remember that Israel was tested over and over."

JIM: "I see the fires as a symptom of the moral sickness in this country. I think this country is on the road to facism, and that it is very possible to overthrow the democratic process.

"These incidents (vandalism and arson) are examples of people having troubles and casting about for scapegoats, blaming minorities, women, people out of the traditional moral fibre. Troy once said, 'we are the new niggers.' "

In other words, dear people, society is crumbling around us, inflation sets in, chaos is the norm, everyone is tired and no one understands what is going on. It is a comfort to have someone to blame troubles on, something on which to take out your frustration. A gay man or woman and their church are something visible and solid -- tailor made for attack.

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"They who are near to me are near to the fire. They who are far from Me are far from the Kingdom."

--- Homilae in Jeremiah

It breaks down to those two choices, doesn't it? Either the cutting edge and the fire, or separation and the darkness.

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JIM: "What I see MCC doing is to be a challenge and a threat. I see the Episcopals and Methodists, etc., joining up against us. Ultimately, I don't think the establishment churches can deal with us.

"It's all a part of the socio-economic cycle of this country, and its going to last for at least 10 years."

TROY: "We are going to suffer even more than we have in the past. We not seen anything yet . . . all because of fear . . . a real God is calling men and women who will completely, wholly be called apart to sanctify themselves for a work."

JIM: "The time will come when it will take a certain kind of moral fibre to belong to MCC."

TROY: "I see a real time of testing for the minister in this Fellowship. The Apostle Paul wrote and told us 'above all children, when you have done all you can to stand, stand'. Living on one side, attacked on one side, we're tired. I hear people say it (public harrassment) can't happen in California. 'We're strong, we're liberal.' The jews said the same thing in Berlin.

"The Lord is leading us. In the old days, we kept one foot in the established church. No more. Those days are over, but people still have the slave mentality. The Elders fully believe we're coming to a time of whole-scale defection from this church. There'll be all sorts of excuses: 'we don't want to deal with the question of male pronouns, with a spanish congregation', etc.

"They're not interested that the Church is a vessel apart. Burnings are just the first and easiest of what will happen. I don't see a period of (numerical) growth ahead of us, but a strengthening that will make us a threat to the established churches. I say 'in this country' but I see it happening in Australia, England, Europe, where ever we have churches."

****

In the Bible we read of Gideon, an Israeli farmer and occasional soldier called by God for a special task -- to drive the Midianites out of Israel. Gideon sent out the word that help was needed -- and 32,000 men, strong and stalwart soldiers, responded.

And you know what? God told Gideon that wasn't good enough -- he had too many uncommitted people to do the work that needed to be done. So Gideon told everyone who didn't want to be there to split. And 22,000 of his soldiers took off for home. And God said, "Gideon, I don't mean to harp on this, but you've still got a lot of people here whose hearts aren't in this. They're along for a joy ride, and we've got too much work to do to bother with half-hearted commitment. And to be honest, Gideon, I'm afraid with all these soldiers you just might have a tad of trouble remembering that your strength really comes from Me."

So Gideon weeded his forces out one last time -- and ended up going into battle with 300 men and a handful of jars and trumpets – and coming out with a victory.

The moral of this story is two-fold: 1) It's always quality and not quantity

What happened to

that gets the job done, and 2) God's ways are not the way we'd do things.

****

And what effect will all of this have on established churches?

JIM: "One part of me says no effect at all. Churches will turn their backs, shut their ears. But individuals within those churches will be affected. Their church will have failed them in a most meaningful way: service to the oppressed.

"I don't think mainline churches will come to our aid – individuals, yes. I hope I'm wrong, having said that. We're in for both cultural and religious oppression -- from society and the church. The churches won't stand up for us. But I hope I'm wrong.

"The great problem in the meantime, is that we could turn this country over to a military dictator. One has only to read the history of the Nixon regime to realize that we were just a hair's breath away from turning this country over to a military regime. This is a time when the middle class is insecure and there's widespread cynicism. I don't think people fully understand what it means that Briggs can get all those signatures for his initiative, that civil rights legislation can even come to a vote in Wichita, St. Paul, Dade County, and then lose."

****

"What of the homosexuals? Did you weep when one was beaten to death by the police in Los Angeles? When another was shot in the back and killed in a park in Berkeley? Does it upset you? If it does, you have not shown it. Jesus said, 'I know your works, that you are neither cold nor hot. So then because you are lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth.'

"Oh! Church, if only you would keep the teachings that were delivered to you . . . 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, strength, and your neighbor as yourself.' . . . But you haven't. You have rejected the homosexual . . . and now . . . for the most part they have rejected you.

"I am thankful I still have a God. You cannot take that God away from me! Church, it is you that left me, not I who left you. You would try to make me believe that God does not care for me, but I know 'though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me!' Oh! Church! I pray that you will wake up and call ALL of your CHILDREN back to your bosom and soul."

--- excerpted from an open letter from Troy Perry, quoted in his book *The Lord is My Shepherd and He Knows I'm Gay.*

****

JIM: "We've become the new justification for the middle class to blame for things being insecure. It's the same thing that happened to jews in World War II. Gay people have to understand that we are not just fighting for gay rights. We are fighting for the democratic process.

"I think the country is in trouble, and we are being made the brunt of it. . and then there's the failure of the establishment church to be responsible. We may have to end up in front of the doors of every major denomination and refuse to allow them to do this.

"Our people have gotten complacent with success. With Briggs (John Briggs is a California legislator leading a November initiative drive to bar avowed gays or anyone who has spoken positively about homosexuality from being employed IN ANY CAPACITY in California public schools) etc., the days of it being easy to join MCC are over. In the early days, it took moral courage to join MCC.

"We are entering a time of sifting . . . it's not necessarily bad. It's unfortunate, but out of it will come a more militant, smaller, committed church."

****

"I will lead them into the fire
and refine them as silver is refined,
test them as gold is tested.
They will call on my name
and I shall listen;
and I shall say: These are my people;
and each shall say Jehovah is my God!"
--- Zechariah 13:9

...and a woman pastor in LA...

The unthinkable has happened.

It wasn't enough that 10 percent of the Fellowship's buildings had been vandalised in the last five years . . . and that civil rights legislation aimed at gays had been repealed by voters in Miami, St. Paul, Eugene, Wichita . . . but now: there's a woman pastor in the founding church, MCC Los Angeles, CA.

Is nothing sacred? Isn't this carrying this liberal, progressive, inclusive stuff too far? Now, just what does all this mean?

It could just mean that the Fellowship is growing up, says the Rev. Jeri Ann Harvey, newly-elected pastor at MCC - LA and ex-pastor of MCC of the Resurrection in Houston, TX.

"I think it shows a congregation is willing to set aside some prejudices, sexism, and is growing enough to look at a pastor who is Christ-centered," said the Rev. Harvey. "It means we're realizing that women can be strong and called of God to minister and lead."

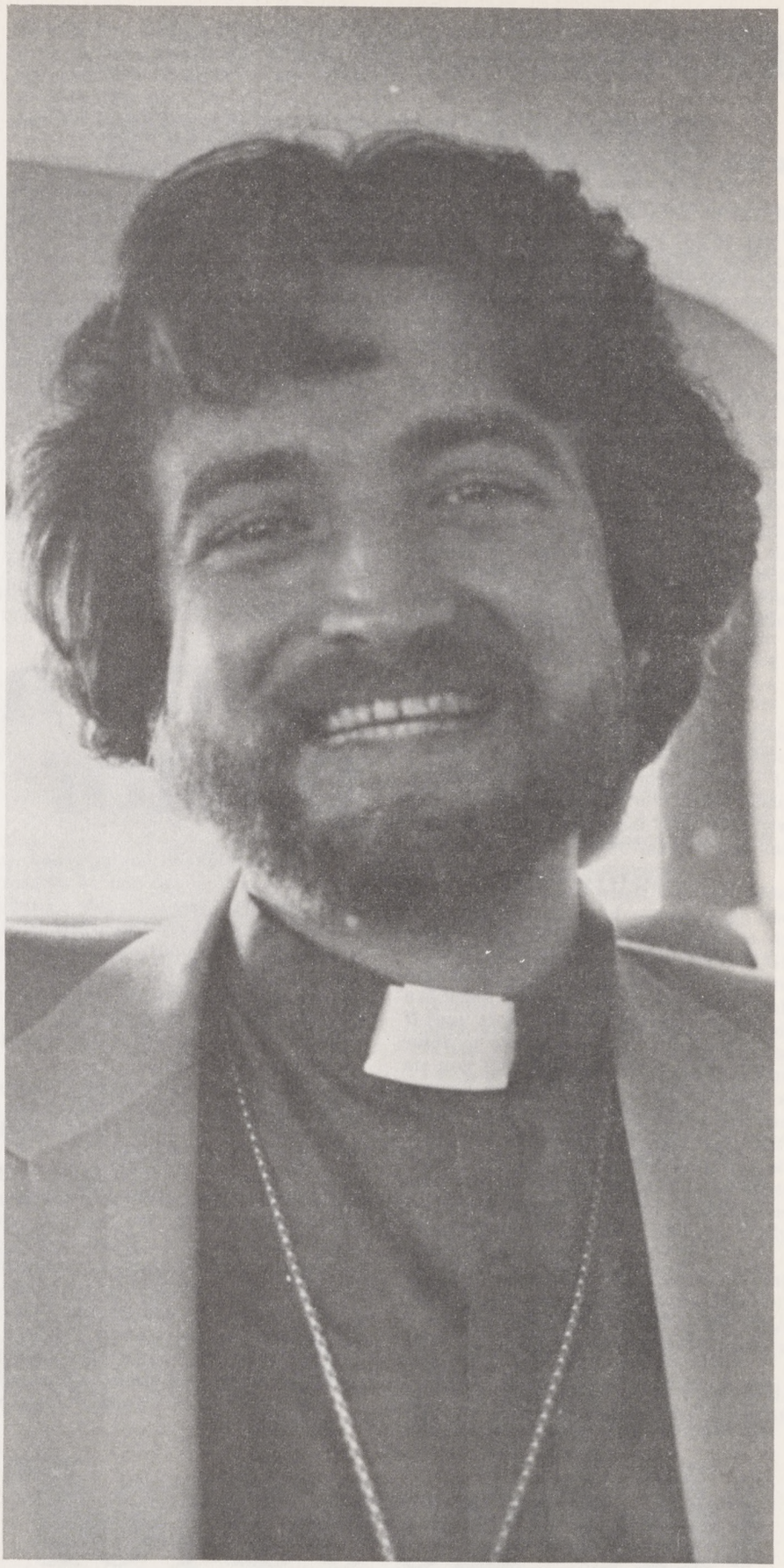
Historically, in 1973 the Rev. Elder Freda Smith, MCC Sacramento, CA, was the first woman elected to the Board of Elders. She was also the Fellowship's first ordained woman -- things that were considered news at the time.

"I'm tired of the mystique of the L.A. church," Rev. Harvey continued. "Everyone says 'how are you handling it?' Well, it's just a church, and I'm impressed by the simplicity, and by the single-minded love of this church for Jesus. I had voices of doom calling me up: 'that church will eat you up in months', or 'a woman could never pastor that church, handle that church.' Well, they said that in Houston, and here I am. This church IS notorious for being anti-female pastor, but here I am, and will be as long as God is my partner and strength."

Sometimes, the "good ol' days" weren't all that good. And all God's children said amen. †

the good ol' days?

Rev. Lee Carlton: "Just As I Am"



The Rev. Lee Carlton is a homosexual and a Christian, lifestyles considered incompatible by most churches.

But Carlton and thousands of fellow homosexuals have found a church where they can freely express their sexual and religious convictions.

Metropolitan Community Church (MCC), founded in 1968, caters to homosexuals who have not been accepted in traditional denominations. Carlton is the new pastor of the Metropolitan Community Church in Jacksonville, which is now in its fourth year.

"My real dedication in my work finds its basis in that I am a Christian," Carlton said. "I accepted Christ when I was age 6. As I say at the beginning of each service here, 'In God, there is neither Jew nor Gentile, male nor female, gay nor straight.'

"I don't have to find justification for what I am," Carlton said, "I can stand before God and present myself as one of his children and know his complete acceptance."

Carlton, 31, has been a minister in the Metropolitan Church for seven years. Prior to that he was a licensed minister in the Church of God.

"I've been homosexual as long as I can remember," Carlton said. "Religion didn't present a problem until I went to Northwest Bible College in Minot, N.D. For the first time, I ran into people who talked about queers. So, I was quietly homosexual."

After encountering negative attitudes toward homosexuality, Carlton went to a counselor.

"I was told to take cold showers and get married," he said.

After graduating from Ridgedale Theological Seminary, Carlton married a

Reprinted with permission from the *Times-Union and Journal*, Jacksonville, FL, February 4, 1978. Written by Lilla Ross.

woman who understood his sexual preference. "We worked very well together," he said. "We had a daughter who is 10 now. I told her about me when she was 5. She handles it very well."

Carlton said he found a heterosexual marriage wasn't satisfying his needs and got a divorce. He has been united (the term for a gay marriage) with Christian Carlton for five years.

He was also divorced from the Church of God when he told his superior he was gay.

"I thought it was hypocritical of the church," he said. "The church preached divine healing, so if it was a sickness I could be healed. It preached forgiveness, so if it was a sin I could be forgiven."

Instead, Carlton was told he must leave the ministry and could never be reinstated, a policy he regards as a double standard.

"A minister who is guilty of adultery is put on probation for two years and if he has behaved himself can then be reinstated, " Carlton said. "That's like saying one sin is worse than another."

After closing the door to the establishment church, Carlton said he found the door marked "FREEDOM" flung wide open. "It was very traumatic," Carlton said. "I had never been to a gay bar. I didn't smoke or drink. I had to learn responsibility for my new-found freedom."

After a bout with depression, Carlton attempted suicide.

While in the hospital, he said, "I felt that God was saying to me; 'I don't have stepsons and step-daughters. Either you are my son or you're not. Stop telling me who I can love.'

"I went back to the church that had asked me to leave and I knelt at the altar and prayed, 'If there is any truth to the hymn *Just As I Am*, here I am. You called me to the ministry and blessed my work and you knew I was a homosexual."

About a month later, Carlton heard about the Metropolitan Church and joined it in Miami. He returned to Tampa, where he had been living, and organized his first congregation.

Since then he has been pastor of the mother church in Los Angeles, and undertaken evangelical mission work in Australia, New Zealand, Nigeria, and Western Europe.

The condition of the emerging gay Christian community, Carlton said, is comparable to that of the Gentile Christians in the first century, who were not initially accepted into the Christian community.

When the Apostle Peter balked at accepting Gentiles into the church, Carlton said, God told him in a vision "That which I have cleansed, you do not call common or unclean."

Peter was forced to take a second look, Carlton said.

And, all the evangelical churches will have to take another look (at homosexualism), too, Carlton said. "Unless they are willing to adhere to every letter of the law," he said, "they can't use the Bible as a social weapon to dehumanize people."

"God is love. There is no prerequisite in his command to know Jesus. He didn't say, 'Come to me all you heterosexuals.' I have seen homosexual men and women who have accepted Christ and matured spiritually. I've seen alcoholics quit drinking and drug users kick the habit," Carlton said. "But I have yet to meet a homosexual who has accepted Jesus and become heterosexual."

The Metropolitan Church draws its members from all denominations, Carlton said. Of the 23,000 members in Metropolitan Churches around the world, he said, about a third are heterosexual. "The establishment church would be surprised at the number of disenchanted church people in our churches who found the negative attitude in establishment churches unpalatable," Carlton said.

"In the church we have a unique emphasis in that we deal with sexuality o openly and honestly," Carlton said. "Sex shouldn't be the focal point of a person's life, but for MCC sexuality has been the doorway into a mission and gaining a better understanding of sexuality. The establishment church has a problem in dealing with sexuality."

Carlton counsels with men and women struggling with their sexuality. "Sometimes a person will have had a homosexual experience and think that makes them gay," he said. " A homosexual experience does not make a person a homosexual."

By hosting social activities, Carlton said, the Metropolitan Church offers homosexuals an alternative to gay bars. "I have no argument with gay bars," he said, "but some gays don't like to go to them."

The Metropolitan worship service reflects the influence of many denominations. "We sing like a Billy Graham crusade and we have communion like a high Anglican," Carlton said.

The homosexual statement of faith sounds like a dozen other Protestant covenants. Its tenets include belief in the trinity, the divinely inspired Bible, the incarnation of Jesus, the work of the Holy Spirit, salvation through grace and faith, divine healing, water baptism and holy communion.

The ecumenical spirit of the church, Carlton said, has given him a healthy appreciation for fellow Christians in other denominations, an appreciation he wishes was reciprocal.

Educating the public is one of Carlton's goals as pastor of the Jacksonville church.

"There are so many myths and stereotypes," he said. "Some people think we have orgies or that homosexuality is catching. I've had people refuse to shake my hand."

Carlton would also like to establish a homosexual community service center and a 24-hour hot-line for counseling. Doubling the local church membership of 54 and finding a permanent home for the church are also on Carlton's agenda.

Carlton sees the church as a means for organizing homosexuals in the community. The gay community has been recognized as a political and economic force, he said, citing the boycott of Florida orange juice as an example. Politicians have also taken note of the voting power in the gay community, he said, and make the rounds of Metropolitan churches during election time.

Although dedicated to non-violence, Carlton considers himself an activist when necessary, a militant.

While pastor of the Los Angeles church, Carlton led an all-night vigil on the steps of the Los Angeles Times in an effort to convince the paper news about the gay community should be treated with as much seriousness as other news. The strategy worked, he says.

Despite the public outcry against homosexuality, Carlton is optimistic about the future.

"Today is the day of salvation for gays," he said.

God was saying to me, stop telling me who I can love.

The Rev. Carlton conducted a fast on the steps of the Federal building in Jacksonville, FL May 9-16 in response to Wichita's repeal of its gay rights ordinance. He also urged other UFMCC clergy to fast publicly for three days to pray for human rights and to "protest the unconstitutional practice of allowing the majority to vote on the civil rights of a minority.

A large number of UFMCC clergy fasted with the Rev. Carlton, and MCC congregations across the country kept a 24 hour prayer vigil during the fast, asking for a favorable vote in Eugene, OR.

†

The Transsexual Plight

...stranger in a strange land...

By Paula Nielson

From childhood's hour I
Have not been
As others were — I
Have not seen
As others saw — I
Could not bring
My passions from
A common spring.
—Edgar Allen Poe

For the average hetereosexual man or woman it is almost inconceivable that anyone should want to change the sex or gender into which he or she was born, especially such radical means as major surgery. For the average homosexual person, this same attitude prevails. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for transsexuals to find understanding, sympathy and, most of all, empathy. They don't find it in traditional churches; they don't find it in medical circles (although, with progress, this slowly is changing in various hospitals and clinics throughout the United States); and they don't find it in their families, in most cases. Yet, so strong is the desire in many for surgery that self-multilations are no rarity, and how often a mysterious suicide may be related to the utter misery of a transsexual is anybody's guess.

I have been actively involved in Portland Metropolitan Community Church for just about a year. It has been a blessing for me to be able to serve my Lord and not have to hide anything. I am referring, of course, to my transsexualism. I have found total love and acceptance in M.C.C. but, even so, I have not always been understood. I have heard comments that were cruel, although not intentionally so, and I'll have to admit that there have been times when I was tempted to retreat back into the proverbial closet. Yet I know that God had called me into this Fellowship for a distinct purpose, and I dare not look back. With God's love in my heart, and with the help of the Holy Spirit, I have been able to forgive those who made the cruel remarks because I realize that those remarks were made out of ignorance rather than out of a desire to be hurtful. Nevertheless, the remarks did hurt.

Enlightenment on this most misunderstood subject is needed in our Fellowship if we are going to practice Christian Social Action and be a truly inclusive fellowship. By "inclusive" I mean that no one is excluded from our love and understanding, and that just as God loves and understands all, so must we. As the outreach of our Fellowship expands, so must our understanding expand. Troy Perry said: "...many of us will be called upon to make sacrifices for the Revelation on which this Fellowship is founded, that is 'God loves ALL people.' Many in the Universal Fellowship will be persecuted because that revelation from God sounds too radical for many so-called 'Christians.' " "...We..have to end oppression by standing and exposing ignorance for what it is..."

The attitude of some gay people toward transsexuals is no different than that of Anita Bryant towards homosexuals. (Hopefully, we in M.C.C. have risen above the Anita Bryant mentality that says: "If God intended people to be homosexual, He [She] would have created Adam and Bruce.")

For the uneducated, there are only two sexes: a person is either male or female — Adam or Eve. The educated and enlightened realize that every "Adam" contains elements of "Eve" and every "Eve" harbors traces of "Adam." physically as well as psychologically.

In 1966, Dr. Harry Benjamin wrote a book entitled *The Transsexual Phenomenon*. There is no better authority on this subject on the market today.

Modern researchers, delving into the so-called "riddle of sex" have actually produced, so far, nothing but more confusion. No one knows why some people are "straight" while others are gay, even though much theorizing has been done. Instead of the conventional two sexes with their anatomical differences, there may be up to ten or more separate concepts and manifestations of sex. Chromosonal sex, genital sex, legal sex, hormonal sex, germinal sex, psychological sex, these are just a few propounded by Dr. Benjamin in his book. And speaking of psychological "sex." in many cases it is in complete opposition to all other "sexes." Great problems arise for those persons in whom this phenomena occurs. Their lives are often tragic, as is the plight of the transsexual, whose life often leads through barren deserts of loneliness, misunderstanding, ignorance and out-and-out bigotry. The transsexual often finds nowhere to turn for understanding. If transsexuals cannot find understanding and compassion in M.C.C., where *WILL* they find it?

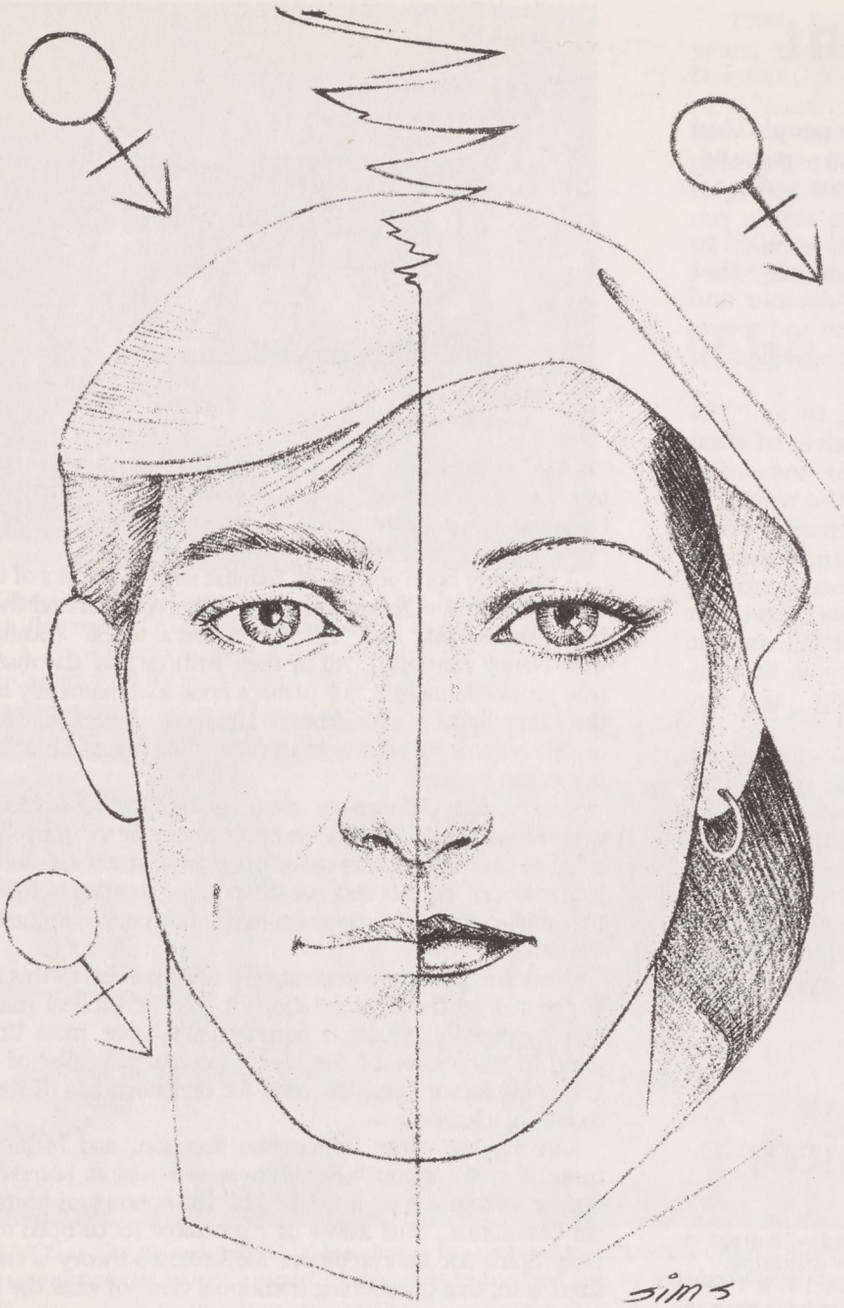
Many psychiatrists and psychoanalysts ascribe to early childhood conditioning the plight of such patients who feel that their minds and their souls are trapped in the wrong bodies. However, equally unfavorable childhood influences can be traced back in persons who later grew into perfectly "normal" adulthood with no apparent split between the psychological and the physical sex. On the other hand, research into the childhood of Christine Jorgenson reveals highly FAVORABLE childhood influences. So there is ample proof that a constitutional factor other than the events of childhood must be at work.

Thoughts & Testimonies: The Laity Speak

DIGNITY N.Y. sets service committees

Dignity/New York has announced the formation of a *Service Committee*. The primary focus of this committee is on those persons within the gay community who, by reason of physical handicaps, age, and other life circumstances have special needs that are not met, because of sexual orientation, within the current social structure.

One of the committee's current projects is a monthly cassette "sound magazine" for the gay blind. The committee is also involved in a prison outreach program, and has joined with *Integrity (Gay Episcopals) and Women and Children First* for the establishment of a "big brother/big sister" program for the children of homosexual parents. †



In his book, Dr. Benjamin makes a distinction between transvestism, transsexualism and homosexuality. There are, he says, definitely various degrees of transvestism and transsexualism which vary from individual to individual, even as there are various degrees of homosexuality and bisexuality in individuals.

Most people, including gay people, need to be educated on the difference between what is a "drag queen" as opposed to what is a "tranvestite." The majority of transvestites are overtly hetereosexual (although many may be latent bisexuals). For the most part, transvestites "feel" as men and know that they ARE men; marry and often raise families. (A few of them, however, when they are "dressed" can, as part of their female role, react homosexually to the attentions of an unsuspecting heterosexual man.) The transvestite's marriage is frequently endangered, since only a relatively few wives can tolerate seeing their husbands in female attire. The average hetereosexual woman wants a "man" for a husband, not someone who (even occasionally) wears "women's" attire. Mutual concessions have often enough preserved such marriages, mostly for the sake of children.

Now the transsexual, male or female, is deeply unhappy as a member of the sex – or gender – to which he or she was assigned by the anatomical structure of the body, particularly the genitals. These persons can somewhat appease their unhappiness by dressing in the clothes of the opposite sex, that is to say, by cross-dressing, and they are, therefore, transvestites too. But while dressing, in and of itself, would satisfy the transvestite who is content with his/her anatomical sex – it is only incidental and not more than a partial or temporary help to the transsexual. Transsexuals feel that they BELONG to the other sex and want to be and function as members of the opposite sex, not only to appear as such. For many, their sex organs are deformities that must be changed by the surgeon's knife. I do wish to point out, however, that whether or not they have had their genitals altered via surgical means, transsexuals DO feel as members of the opposite sex and want to live as such and are happy only when they are totally and completely accepted as such.

Dr. Benjamin points out that transvestites with their more or less pronounced sex and gender indecision *may* actually all be transsexuals but in varying degrees of intensity.

A low degree of largely unconscious transsexualism can be appeased through cross-dressing and demands no other therapy for emotional comfort. These, Dr. Benjamin places in "Group 1" in a detailed chart on varying degrees of transsexualism.

Then there is a medium degree of transsexualism which makes greater demands in order to restore or maintain an emotional balance. The identification with the female cannot be satisfied by wearing her clothes alone. Some physical changes, especially breast development, are requirements for easing the emotional tension. Some of these patients waiver between indulgence in transvestism and transsexual demands for transformation. These, Dr. Benjamin places in "Group 2."

Here I feel the need to interject that there are some who have had sex-change surgery who never should have had it. The consequences, in these cases, have been tragic. This is an area in which those who minister in M.C.C. need to be able to be of help in counselling.

Then there are those whom Dr. Benjamin places in "Group 3," the patients with a high degree of transsexualism, for them a conversion operation is the all-consuming urge. For them, mere cross-dressing is as insufficient a help as aspirin is for a brain tumor headache. Pre-operative patients in this group are unsatisfied by merely "going out in drag," but they do find great emotional relief by living completely as a member of the opposite sex. I cannot emphasize strongly enough, however, that NEVER should

continued on page 23

Editorial Comment

This is an exciting time to be alive.

Just think: we have a chance to be the people God has always yearned for. Called and chosen -- responding in love to our God who creates, redeems and sanctifies -- and that's exciting.

We are called to be the people of God -- called to testify with our lives of the mystery and message that our God is alive, that our God is a Redeemer and Sanctifier who reaches down through time and space, touching and changing lives. *All* lives, regardless of race, sexual orientation, sex or location.

In Fellowship jargon that is referred to as "The Vision". Maybe we need to remind ourselves of what "The Vision" is, that the Gospel is for the entire world, and that the world has yet to see the reality of the Gospel message lived out in totality. British writer C. K. Chesterton once said that "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting. It's never been tried."

Well, it's up to us to 'try it'. It has been said that Satan never gives us the luxury of fighting on one front. For a MCC member the jeopardy is literally double: first, as a Christian, and secondly, as a gay member of society.

Once again: we have a chance to be the people that God has always yearned for, a people committed and consecrated, a people willing to put their very lives on the line for their God. "Get off the ladder if you're not going to paint" is the midwest expression. In other words, there's work to do, and no energy to waste in being more in love with being called, than in love with the One Who did the calling. Have we been called to be called or called to love and serve?

It's an exciting time to be alive. †

* *

Letters To The Editor

Dear Editor:

Since I am a Los Angeles City Fireman, I read with great interest "Pastor? The Church Is On Fire!" in your magazine.

I count eight UFMCC churches burned since 1973. I can't believe it! I had no idea how extensive these fires have been involving MCC churches in other parts of the country.

I know that crypto organizations (the Ku Klux Klan, White Power, Nazis, etc.) appeal to some firemen. I've come in contact with some on the L. A. Fire Department who "hate jews, niggers, and queers", in that order. As you must know, the fire departments across the land are bastions of white "male supremacy" and a known gay would find the going very rough if he were a fireman. Also, most firemen are reactionary.

It should behoove every MCC to take out adequate fire insurance. The premiums undoubtedly are high, but that is the only real protection to have. The backlash against gays and their churches might intensify. I don't know.

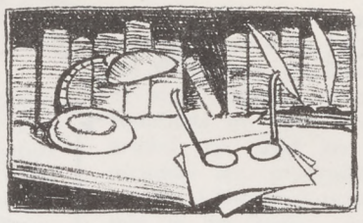
It makes me sick to see what has happened to these UFMCC churches. But an insurance policy (kept in a safe deposit box, etc., and not in the building it insures) is the only way to go.

G.G.

Editor's Note: G.G. is a Los Angeles City Fireman. Throughout his 24 year career, he has had training in both fire prevention and arson investigation.

THE REV. LUCIA CHAPPELLE

Book Review
Book Review
Book Review
Book Review
Book Review
Book Review



Book Review
Book Review

"Is The Homosexual My Neighbor? Another Christian View" by Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott
Harper and Row, 1978 $6.95

I sincerely hope you are all familiar with the works of these two evangelical authors, especially "Women, Men and the Bible" (Mollenkott) and "All We're Meant to Be" (Scanzoni, with Nancy Hardesty). All of their writings bear the mark of true prophetic insight, but perhaps none so dynamically as "Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?" The most outstanding feature of this book is its witness to the vital relevance of Christianity in modern society.

Scanzoni and Mollenkott challenge us all with the fact that it is not enough to "justify" homosexuality or to "prove" that it is sin. God's people are called upon to make the Gospel alive in the world. To this end, we are required to bring to light the full implications that major issues like homosexuality have for the Gospel.

Therefore, only a comparatively small portion of this book is devoted to the interpretation of specific Biblical passages that supposedly condemn homosexuality. Far more time is given to discussions of the basic Christian principles of love, grace, inspiration, and the need for understanding of the homosexual lifestyle.

Among the other key points Scanzoni and Mollenkott make is that, although Scripture speaks against homosexual and heterosexual lust, it is silent on the concept of homosexual orientation. This leaves us responsible to be open to the Holy Spirit for interpretation. Mollenkott's theory is emphasized here, that questioning traditional views of what the Bible says requires more faith in its authority than accepting its superficial meaning does. The need for the Church to confront the real life problems of homosexuals in heterosexual society is also stressed. The authors mince no words in their analysis of homophobia.

In the final section, "Proposing a Homosexual Christian Ethic", Scanzoni and Mollenkott do not offer conclusions, but present a foundation for us to build upon. It is our turn to respond to the bold step toward reconciliation of these two Christian sisters. Perhaps it would be suitable for us to begin with two of the questions they put to their readers in the opening chapter:

"Do I care about the needs of those who must storm and rage against homosexuals because they are afraid about their own sexuality?

"Do I care about the need of Christian communities to build healthy, responsible attitudes toward human sexuality in all its tremendous variety?" †

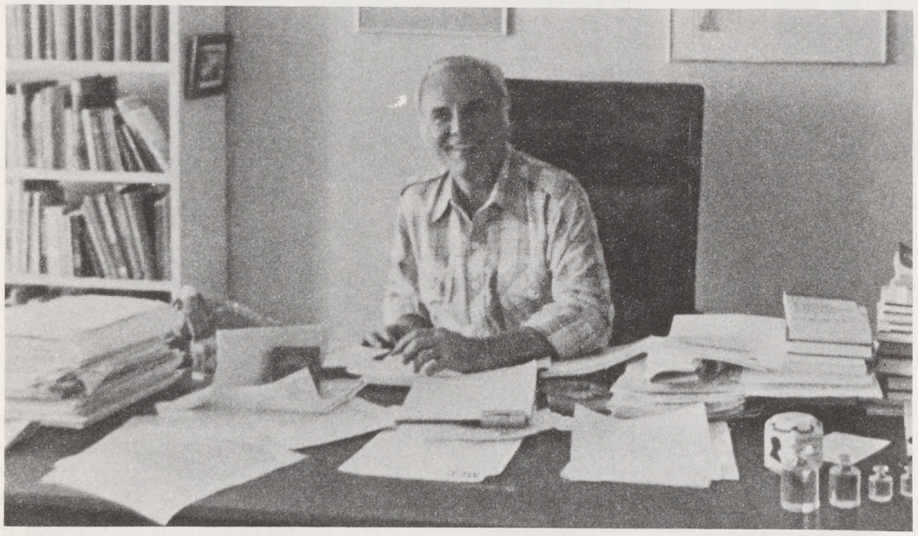
The General Offices of the UFMCC are housed on the sixth floor of a 12 story building, located at 318 W. 9th St. in L.A., two blocks from MCC-LA. The building is predominantly occupied by members of the garment industry.

There has been considerable speculation, for many years, regarding the activities and functions of the General Offices of the UFMCC, located in Los Angeles. A contributing factor to this "guessing game" has been a lack of communication between member church groups and UFMCC Headquarters. This article is presented to introduce the UFMCC personnel to our sisters and brothers world-wide, and to attempt to resolve any questions regarding the function of each individual employed by the UFMCC.

The UFMCC Office

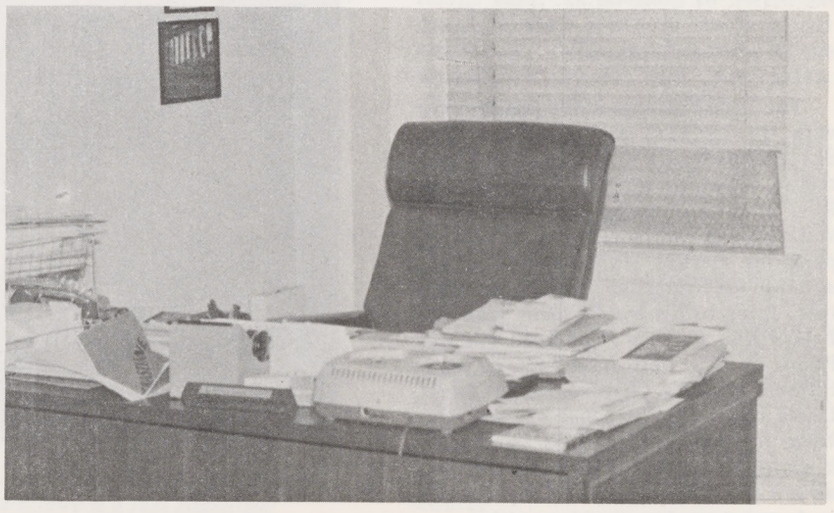
Text by Donna J. Wade

Photography by the Rev. Jeri Harvey

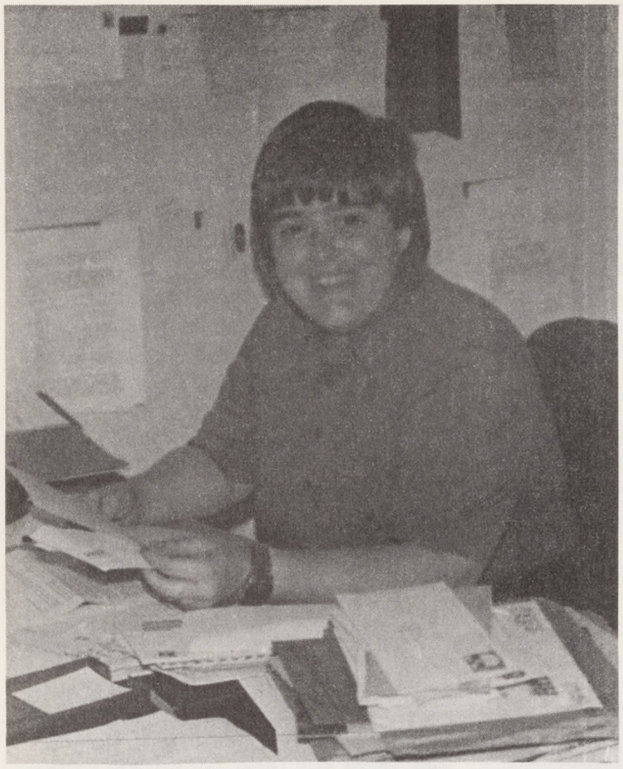


"UFMCC is the place where God has chosen to confront the Christian Church and we are the new prophetic voice . . . part of that prophetic voice is to be involved in our community."

The Rev. Elder James Sandmire is the Treasurer of the UFMCC. He oversees all of the financial dealings of the Fellowship including all tax matters, the insurance program, all banking accounts, preparing financial records for audit, preparing yearly financial reports, and presiding over the Finance Committee. The Rev. Sandmire is on the Board of Trustees of Samaritan Theological Institute, and is very active in many local, state, and national organizations, including: Member of the Board and Treasurer for the New Alliance for Gay Equality, member of the Board of the Gay Rights National Lobby, member of the ACLU-Gay Rights Chapter. He has also served as Chairperson of the California Democratic Council's Gay Caucus.

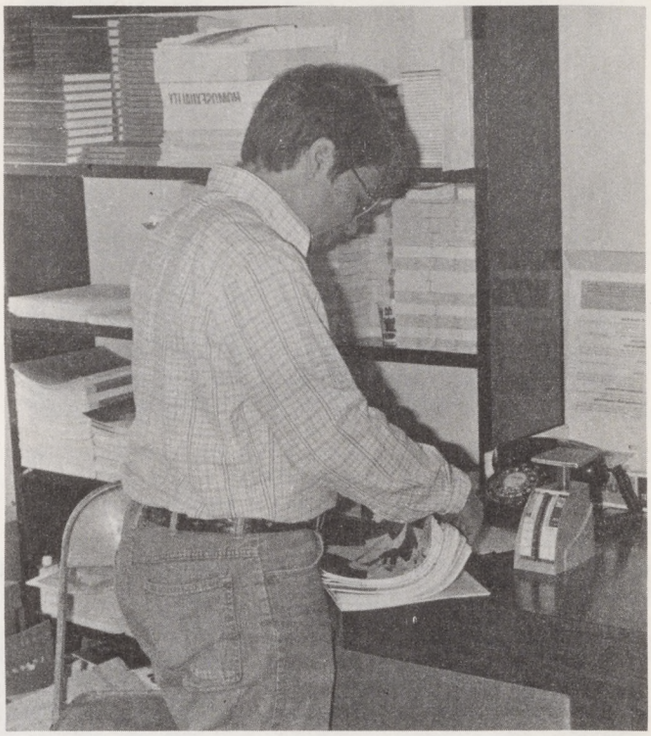


This is the office of the Rev. Troy Perry, Moderator of the UFMCC. It is vacant in this picture because the Rev. Perry was completing one of his frequent tours of many of the churches in our Fellowship. Please realize that we now have over 100 congregations in the Fellowship, each of them anxious to have the Moderator visit them -- consequently, the Rev. Perry must be away from his office much of the time. If you have been trying to get in touch with him, try to have patience.

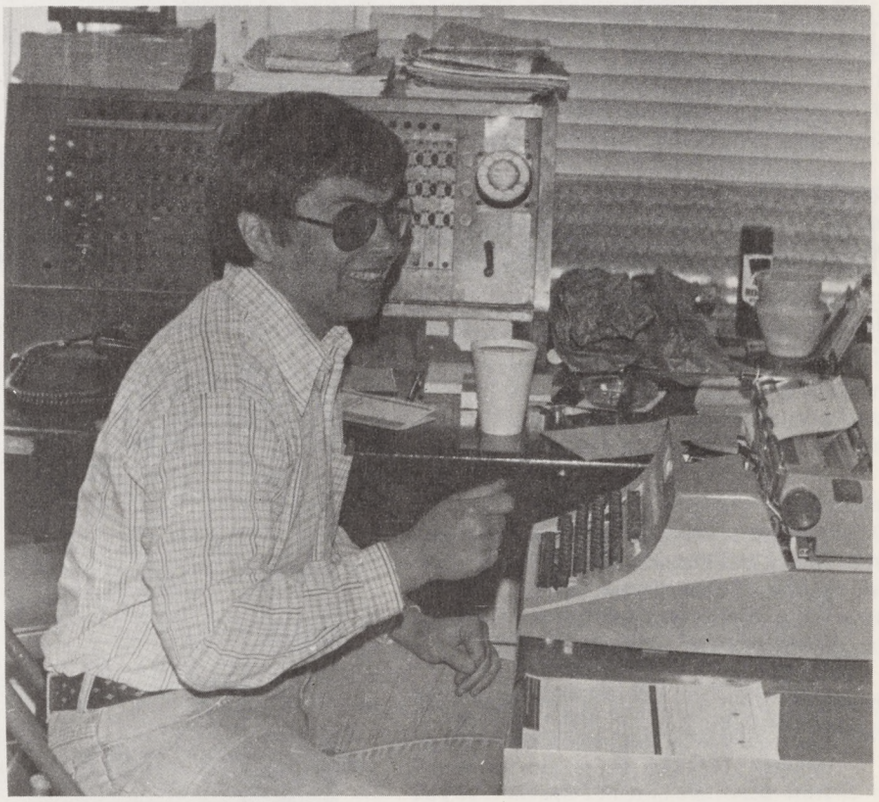


"I believe that this Fellowship is near the beginning of a period of real revival -- revival of individuals living in relationship with God. Helping our members reflect that vital relationship is what our offices are all about."

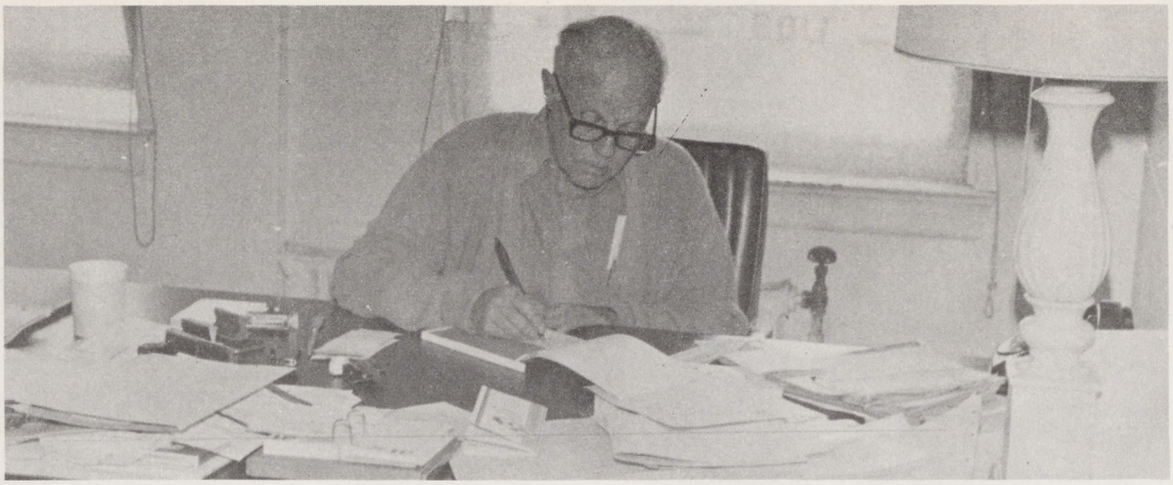
This is the Fellowship's shipping and receiving department. Technically, it has no staff, and the majority of the S & R duties have fallen to the Rev. Carol Cureton, but other staff members help out when possible.



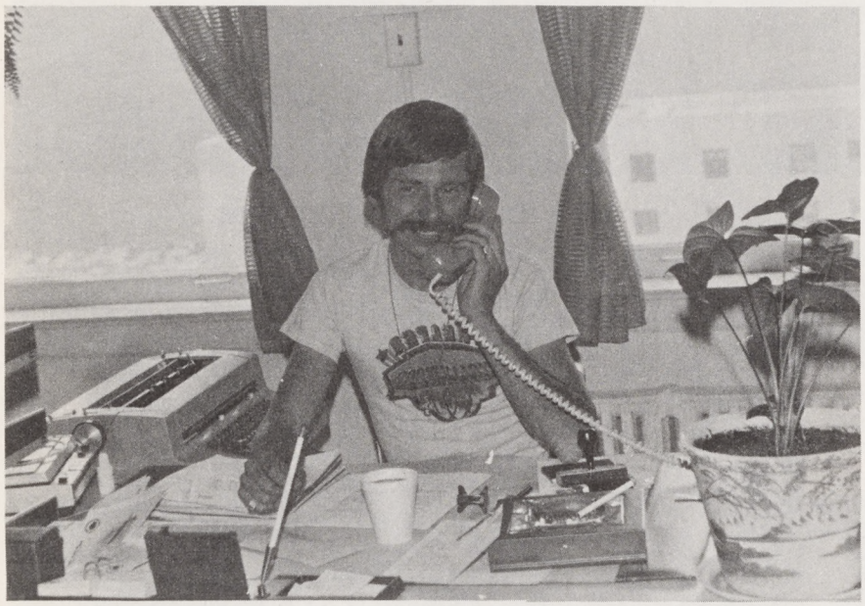
The Rev. Elder Carol Cureton is the Administrative Elder at Fellowship Headquarters. In addition to her numerous duties as Clerk of the Board of Elders, Carol is the personnel and office manager. The Rev. Cureton has a Bachelor of Science degree from Southeast Missouri State University, and was the founding pastor of MCC-St. Louis, MO. She has served as an Elder since August of 1975, and began full-time work in the offices in November of 1977.



The initial contact many people have with the UFMCC is through the Rev. Sky Anderson, UFMCC switchboard operator. In addition to these duties, the Rev. Anderson assists the accounting, and shipping and receiving departments, performs clerical work, and is an instructor for Samaritan Theological Institute. Prior to his employment with the Fellowship, the Rev. Anderson was Co-Pastor of MCC Detroit, MI, and an Institutional Ministry Chaplain for the Great Lakes District. *(For those of you who knew the Rev. Anderson as "Heather", it should be explained that the Rev. Anderson is a transsexual, and is presently undergoing gender reassignment.)*

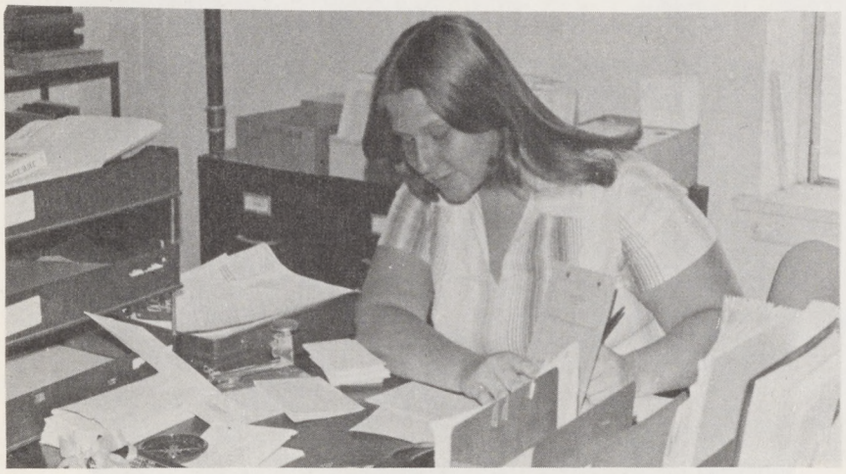


Herb Shannon is the Accountant and Assistant to the Treasurer of the UFMCC. He has been employed in this capacity since October of 1976. His duties include paying the bills, forming the budget, setting up and maintaining ledgers, drafting periodic financial statements, and maintaining the Accounts Payable/Receivable. Herb was formerly clerk of the Board of Directors of MCC Chicago, IL, and Treasurer of the Great Lakes District. He earned a Bachelors degree in Accounting from Northwestern University and a Masters degree in Business Administration from the University of Chicago. He is presently the Treasurer for All Saints MCC in West Hollywood, CA.



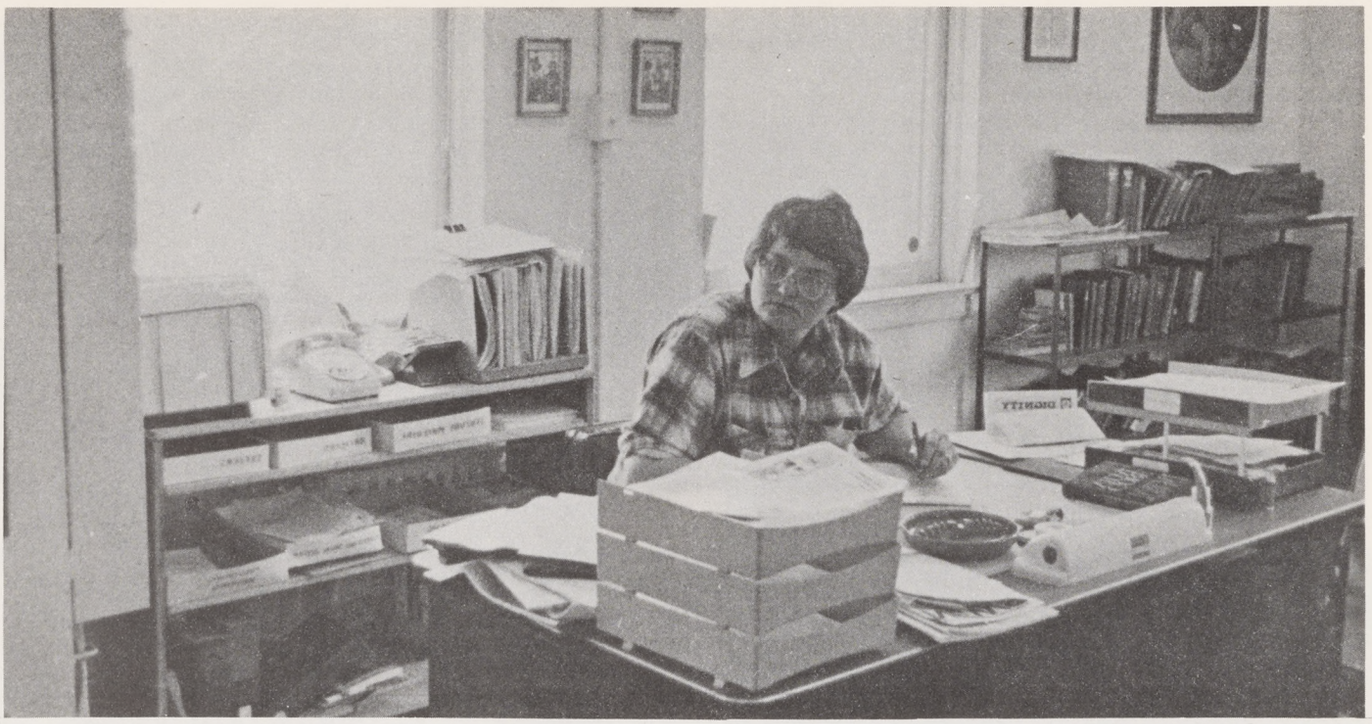
"I believe in Troy's vision, the vision of the UFMCC, and I enjoy working to help further the ideals of the UFMCC. I could have other jobs, which would pay much more, but I feel this job is part of my calling . . . it's the square hole for my square peg."

Any contact that people have with the office of the Moderator of the UFMCC will probably be through Frank Zerilli, Executive Secretary to the Rev. Troy Perry. Employed by the Fellowship since December of 1974, Frank's duties include keeping Rev. Perry's appointment book, typing correspondence, making Rev. Perry's travel arrangements, keeping the UFMCC's church directory current (as much as possible), and receiving all of the Moderator's phone calls. In addition to his duties, Frank is very active in the L.A. gay community, with involvements in the Christopher Street West Association, and many other organizations.



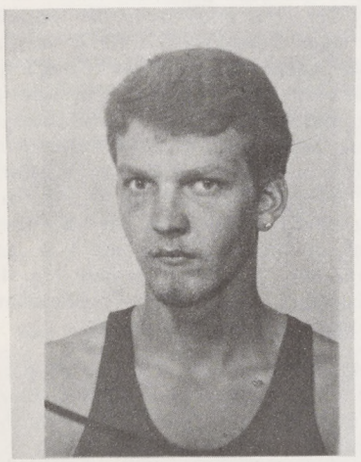
"I am dedicated to the vision of our Fellowship . . . besides, I enjoy a job that is a challenge . . . and, believe me, keeping tabs on Jim Sandmire is a real challenge!"

Ms. Candy Halby is employed part-time as the secretary of the Rev. Elder Jim Sandmire. She has worked with the Department of Publications/Church Services in the past, resigning her position in order to become a full-time student. Her duties include typing correspondence, filing, answering Rev. Sandmire's telephone calls, and other clerical tasks. Candy was Co-Founder and Co-Chairperson of the California Democratic Council. She also does volunteer typing for EXCEL (Exercise in Christian Living), and for Samaritan Theological Institute.



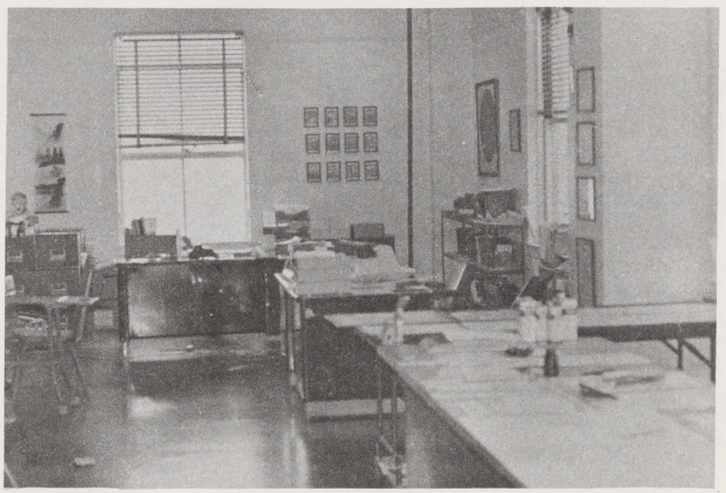
Donna Wade is a volunteer in the publications department, and assists with the preparation of materials to be printed by the Fellowship. She also assists with shipping and receiving, filing, and other clerical tasks.

She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in foreign languages, and is a former police officer. Prior to coming to LA, she was Chairperson of Publications for MCC St. Louis, MO.

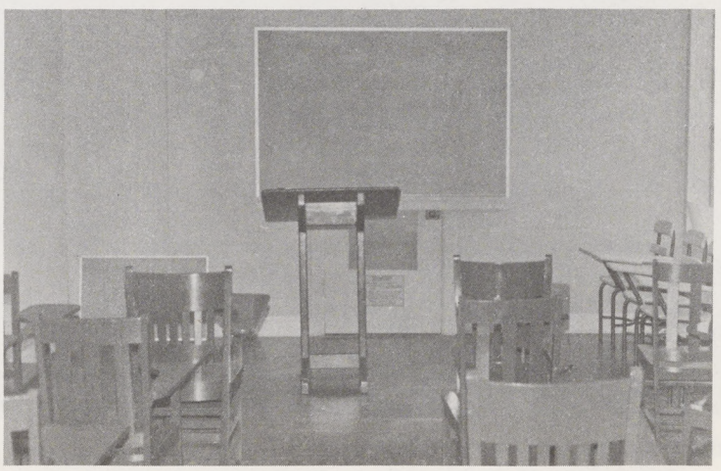


Dan Sims is a Staff Artist for the Fellowship's Publications Department. He does all layout and illustrative work for many of the UFMCC publications. Not on the Fellowship payroll, Dan is employed through the assistance of a government administered funding program (CETA).

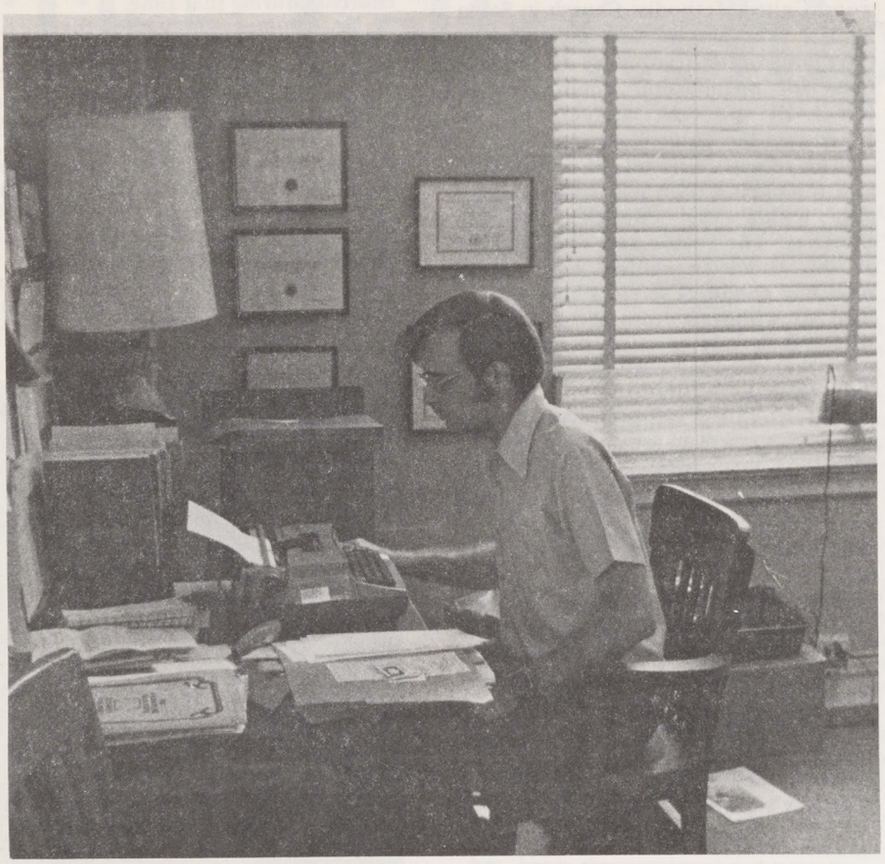
THE UFMCC PUBLICATIONS OFFICE



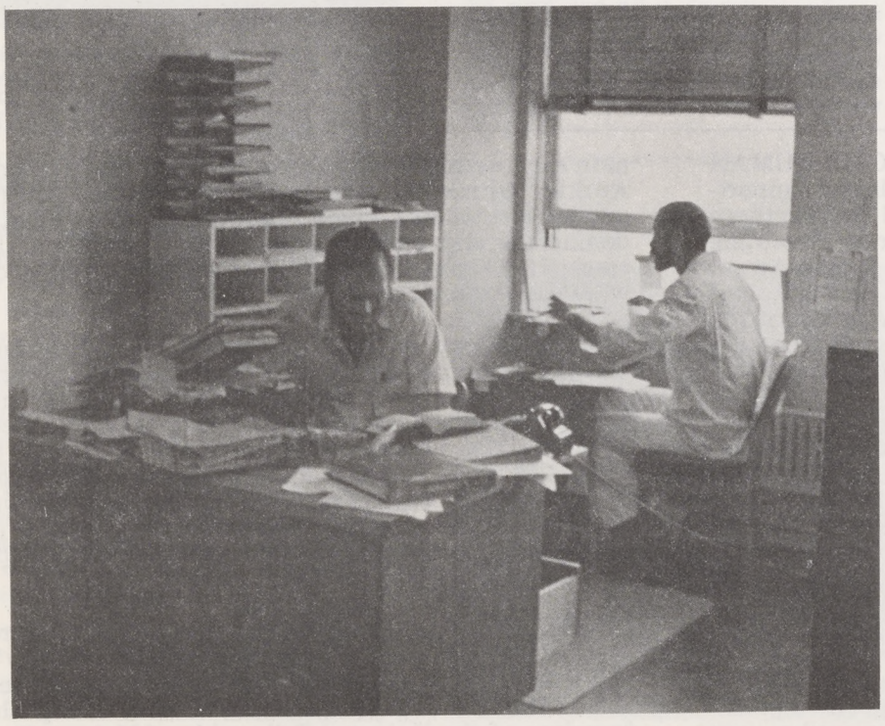
CLASSROOM OF SAMARITAN THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE



"I am determined that we are going to have literate clergy in our Fellowship who can both speak and write the Good News we have been called to proclaim."



Rev. Arthur (left): *"We are the pioneers in the area of institutional outreach programs . . . and many other denominations request our help in establishing their own outreach programs . . . ours is a teaching ministry . . . making others aware of the needs of persons in institutions, and helping to meet those needs."*



John Wilds (right): *" I'm interested in people, and, in particular, in the Fellowship's outreach to our brothers and sisters in institutions."*

The Rev. Jeffrey Pulling is the Dean of Samaritan Theological Institute. He is responsible for all academic areas of the school, as well as answering correspondence, and maintaining the Institute's records. The Rev. Pulling has a Bachelor of Arts degree from Syracuse and a Master of Divinity degree from Andover Newton Theological School .

The Rev. L. Robert Arthur is the UFMCC National Director of the Board of Institutional Ministry (USA). In addition to these many responsibilities, Bob serves as District Coordinator of the Southwest District, and is an instructor at STI. The Rev. Arthur has a Master of Arts degree from Bob Jones University (where he served as Dean of Men), and is a doctoral candidate in Biblical Languages.

John Wilds began working for the UFMCC Board of Institutional Ministry (BIM) in August, 1977. He is the Administrative Assistant to the Rev. Bob Arthur, the BIM's National Director. Although volunteering his efforts initially, John now receives an honorarium for his work through the contributions of UFMCC districts and other interested persons. (His position is not funded through the UFMCC regular budget.) His duties are mostly clerical in nature, and include keeping the BIM's mailing list current, maintaining the BIM's files, handling all correspondence for the BIM, as well as assisting in the organization of BIM training sessions and retreats.

NEW FREEDOM EVANGELISTIC TEAM

The National Evangelistic Team has undergone many changes since the Rev. Ron Anderson, Jeanne Leggett, and Annette Beal began conducting spiritual renewal services for MCC congregations across the United States.

Presently known as *The New Freedom Evangelistic Team*, the team now consists of the Rev. Ron Anderson (an ordained UFMCC minister), Nancy Bogdanowicz, and Karen "Scooter" Barnes.

The team was initially commissioned by the UFMCC Board of Elders to carry out its evangelistic ministry. Now, however, due to fellowship growth and the team's legal incorporation in the state of Texas, the team has become an independent venture, no longer specifically "commissioned" by the Elders, but rather people of the UFMCC exercising the ministry to which they feel God has led them.

The new address of the team is:

NEW FREEDOM
EVANGELISTIC TEAM
POST OFFICE BOX 371
GALENA PARK, TEXAS 77547

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SANTA MONICA, CALIFORNIA

Pastor Jim Dykes and the congregation of MCC West Bay in Santa Monica, CA have been denied membership to the Westside Ecumenical Council (WEC), primarily because of MCC's outreach to the gay community. According to the Rev. Dykes, when MCC's application for membership was read before the Council, other ministers asked 'Isn't that the homosexual church?' The organization then went into Executive Session to vote, and MCC-WB was denied membership, lacking only two votes for approval. Another congregation from Westwood United Methodist Church in Santa Monica was also denied membership. (The organization votes on all applications for membership simultaneously. Either all applicant churches are received into the Council, or none are.)

The refusal to admit MCC West Bay into the organization has caused dissension within the Council's member churches. The Pastor and congregation of the Unitarian church where MCC West Bay conducts services have threatened to withdraw from the Council if MCC-WB is not granted membership, and other churches plan to withdraw if the MCC is accepted.

Only time will tell what will happen. Pastor Dykes has reapplied to the organization, and is confident that MCC-WB will be allowed membership. WEC will vote on West Bay's application at its next business meeting, sometime in June.

But whatever the outcome, MCC West Bay has caused clergy and congregations from other denominations to reexamine their attitudes toward gay people, in general, and gay Christians, in particular. And if we are ever to have human rights for gay people in this country, they will result from changes in society's attitude toward us.

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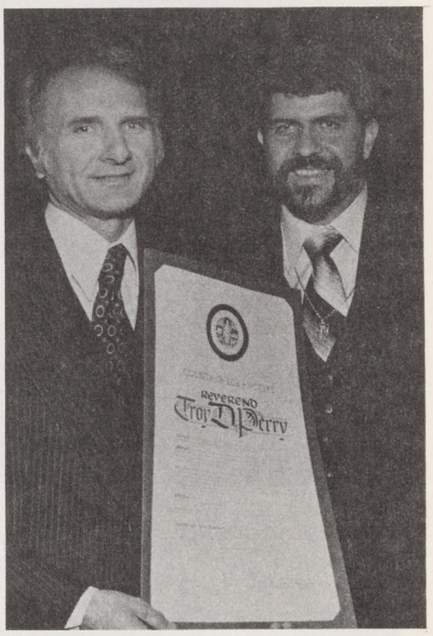
LONG BEACH, CALIFORNIA

In a recent Los Angeles Times interview, a Downey , CA resident remarked that he found MCC Long Beach to be the "friendliest" church in the Los Angeles area. Donald Thomas claimed that he has conducted his personal survey of the churches over the past five years, and that he has visited over 500 churches during that time.

Mr. Thomas commented that he had been ignored at many of the churches, with the exception of MCC Long Beach.

The Rev. Bob Cunningham, pastor of MCC-LB, had a few reservations about the validity of the survey, because it was the work of a single person, as opposed to a team study. Also, Mr. Thomas kept no record of the churches he visited, and this only added to the skepticism regarding his reliability.

Thomas visited MCC-LB approximately two years ago, and claimed that it was the only church in the area where people came up and talked to him.



Los Angeles County Supervisor Ed Edleman presents commendation to the Rev. Elder Troy Perry for outstanding leadership, at a recent ACLU dinner in his honor.

REV. TROY PERRY RECEIVES ACLU HUMAN RIGHTS AWARD --- Over 1200 friends and supporters of the gay rights movement joined the Southern California ACLU - Gay Rights Chapter in presenting the Chapter's Second Annual Human Rights Award to the Rev. Troy Perry, Founder and Moderator of the UFMCC. The awards dinner, held April 29 at the Hollywood Palladium, was the largest dinner ever held for the benefit of human rights for gay men and women.

United States Senator Alan Cranston, keynote speaker for the evening, headed a seemingly endless roster of local, state, and federal representatives in attendance to honor the Rev. Perry. In his address, Sen. Cranston pledged his continued support to the struggle for human rights, and also reminded listeners that only through a *united* effort could human rights for gay people be realized:

"We cannot make our common dreams come true unless we develop a higher sense of shared responsibility, and each of us in America remember our common bond; it's a bond born of the visions of common men and women joined together in an uncommon way, united by the cherished belief that humans, working within the framework of social and governmental institutions, based upon principles of liberty, democracy and mutual respect with a maximum degree of free and individual choices, can together do what cannot be done alone."

The Rev. Perry received numerous commendations and awards from members of state and local government, as well as from representatives of local gay and pro-gay organizations. Congratulatory telegrams were received from persons who could not be present to honor the Rev. Perry, including messages from President and Mrs. Carter, state Governor Jerry Brown, and State Assemblyman Willie Brown, sponsor of California's Consenting Adult legislation, and recipient of last year's Human Rights Award.

Described by Sen. Cranston as "one of the most respected human rights advocates in the country", the Rev. Perry was honored for his ten years of service within the gay rights movement, citing the founding of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches as his most important community contribution. †

The Fellowship Family

NEWS AND NOTES OF MCC PEOPLE AND EVENTS AROUND THE WORLD

Editor's Note: We had originally planned to publish an "over-view" of the recent defeat, in four major cities, of gay rights ordinances. Rather than printing all the vote totals and other information already published in the nation's newspapers, we thought the readers might better appreciate hearing the thoughts of some of the people who reside in the cities where the referrendums were held. We encourage anyone in those cities (Wichita, St. Paul, and Eugene) to share their thoughts with our readers.

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL OF OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS:

We would like to extend to you a very personal and special thank you for all of your encouragement and prayers during our recent struggly to retain our gay rights ordinance. We know that all of you were here with us in spirit, if not in person. It was a long, hard campaign, and at times it was quite depressing.

However, news of your constant support and encouragement was always a source of uplifting and faith. We may not have won at the polls, but in all of our hearts there is a victorious spirit that will never be defeated. As a result, we have found many new friends in Christ in our community, and for that we are very thankful. Also in our community, both straight and gay, both religious and non-religious, we have gained a new sense of solidarity, support, and strength.

It is obvious to us that God's spirit indeed working with us here in Eugene (Oregon) and we know that much of it is certainly due to all of you out there who have continually kept us in your prayers and in your hearts. A special thank you goes out to all of those people who participated in the special time of fasting and prayer initiated by the Rev. Lee Carlton, and of course, we send all of our love and blessings to the Rev. Carlton for his special act of encouragement to us and to all of those who have or will be going through the same struggle.

We shall, indeed, overcome those who would oppose us, because we know that only through Christ will the victory be won and only through Christ will we receive our freedom.

Yours in Christ,

The Board of Directors and
the Ministerial Staff of
MCC of the Willamette Valley
Eugene, Oregon
The Rev. Ann Montague, Pastor

THE REV. KEITH DAVIS has taken over the pulpit of MCC Trinity. Fresh from his work as interim pastor of MCC Jacksonville, FL and a work with the Columbia, South Carolina church, his first Sunday was May 14.

According to the Rev. Davis, the service schedule will remain unchanged at present . . . . joint services the first Sunday night of the month with MCC Pomona . . . . and the third Sunday evening of the month Trinity MCC turns around and meets in Pomona with that congregation . . . both are at 7:30 p.m.

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NEW YORK, NY

Metropolitan Community Church of New York has established the Gay Community Center of New York in "The Triangle Building", third floor, 26 Ninth Avenue at 14th Street in New York City.

The new Gay Community Center is being developed to serve the entire gay community, offering space for many other organizations.

The Rev. Gil Lincoln, pastor of MCC New York, said that the new location has been the result of a long intense search for proper facilities for MCC's offices and many educational and social activities. "We feel we have located the best possible place for the expansion of our own and other organizations' programs. And we look forward to fine cooperative relations with the growing number of gay organizations who wish to avail themselves of the new gay center."

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THE REV. DEBBIE GENDRON, formerly pastor of *TRINITY MCC in Riverside, CA*, has begun a new work in the Palm Springs, CA area. Her last Sunday in Riverside was May 7. According to the Rev. Bob Arthur, UFMCC Southwest District Coordinator, Rev. Gendron has been working in the Palm Springs area for the past two or three months, and was planning to petition for Study Group status at the end of May.

"They had 23 people in service May 14," he said, "and their status looks sound."

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

A week-long celebration marked the 7th anniversary of MCC-DC, April 30 to May 7. Just as the church began with a family of 10 worshippers and grew to almost 200 strong, the celebration of MCC's outreach in the nation's capital began as a family affair and grew into a joyous witness to the community.

The week's activities included a semi-formal anniversary dinner at which the Rev. Elder Charlie Arehart (Denver,CO) was the guest speaker.

On the final day there was a festival of love and life, beginning with an open-air celebration. MCC-DC Pastor Larry Uhrig commented that the week's events were a "symbol to the city of Washington" about MCC's past, present, and future roles as a viable Christian church.

The Rev. Gil Lincoln (Pastor, MCC New York) and the Rev. Stan Harris, (MCC-Baltimore) were also present at the celebration, joining with the Rev. Arehart and the Rev. Uhrig to install the Rev. Frank Murr as the church's first full-time Assistant Pastor.

The choir of MCC Washington D.C. performs at an open air festival, part of that church's seventh anniversary celebration in May.

A Washington journalist once wrote the following about MCC-DC, and the ideas expressed exemplify the ideals to which MCC-DC adheres:

"MCC-DC is oriented toward productive, meaningful involvement in the here and now, and is not hampered by emphasis on the promise of reward in the life hereafter. The church's commitment to total involvement has already produced great strides forward for Washington gays, and MCC-DC is not about to stop now.

"MCC-DC abounds with a spirit of ecumenicalism that is unique. You come as you are, and you are welcome. There is no hard sell of Christianity at MCC DC. The people in attendance were from every walk of life, men and women of every race, religion, and creed. They were as heterogeneous a group of gays as can be found under one roof."

For seven years, MCC-DC has preached the message "The light is for all time; the love is for all people", and "MCC-DC is not about to stop now."

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"INSIGHT"

"Insight", a quarterly of gay Catholic opinion, has published an issue devoted to the concerns of Catholic lesbians. The issue is edited and written by women members of *Dignity*, the international movement of gay and concerned Roman Catholics.

"Insight" is published by Dignity for the non-gay community "to make the gay experience understandable." It is available at bookstores or directly from the publisher at POB 5110, N.Y, N.Y., 10017.

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PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

One thing's for sure – gay folk learn to be good survivors. Members of MCC Providence, Rhode Island, were able to show and share this unique strength this winter in the face of a chilling blizzard that dumped over three feet of snow on the city. As staffers for one for the Rhode Island Blizzard '78 storm shelters, twelve faithful members, including Pastor Marge Ragona, aided in housing 200 stranded travelers and in feeding over 1,300 people a day for five days while Providence dug itself out of the drifts.

By late afternoon on Monday, February 6, it was clear that a crisis was at hand for Providence, and disaster teams in the city began gearing up. The snow had descended on the city shortly after midday, driving and swirling in furious gusts, making automobile travel impossible, and even walking difficult. There was about two and a half feet of snow on the ground, drifts up to five feet, and the city was at a virtual standstill.

At Mathewson St. Methodist Church, where MCC meets for worship, the emergency shelter had taken shape. Earlier in the winter, in January, members of MCC Providence had formed a shelter staff during an ice storm. As it turned out, the shelter wasn't really needed at that time, but setting it up had been good practice for the parishioners. When the blizzard blew in in February, the few people available organized themselves immediately into work groups for sleeping quarters, food, medical aide, and communication with the outside for the stranded.

The shelter population swelled as folk poured into the church's central location from the bus and train stations where they had gone for transportation around or out of the city. As one of the few shelter locations that had large scale cooking facilities, the church became a resource center for other disaster aide stations and personnel, and MCC parishioners became the backbone of the center's services.

Especially helpful during the early days of the blizzard were members with nursing and cooking skills. MCC Pastor Marge Ragona, herself a former nurse, joined the staff at the church after being stranded for two days on a bus that she had taken home on Monday from Boston. The bus never made it beyond Pawtucket, a town north of Providence. Refusing to stay put, Marge hiked the ten miles from Pawtucket to Providence. She immediately started working in the leadership of the shelter, providing special skill from her former experience in cooking for large numbers of people.

By Thursday, the shelter had settled into a sort of routine. There were 12 volunteers from MCC during the four days at the end of the week, and eight or nine sutdents from the Red Cross disaster wing at Brown University. Together, this crew served close to 200 people who could not make it home. For many, both stranded citizens and shelter volunteers, this was their first contact with Metropolitan Community Church. Most were surprised at a church with a *woman* pastor, and many had never heard of MCC, not its ministry to gay Christians, so service at the shelter also provided educational opportunities!

And the outreach: The shelter provided food for the Providence police force who were on round the clock duty. The good Sergeant Donally, talking to Rev. Ragona on the phone would bellow, "Hey, sweetheart, whatdya have for us this time?" On one trip to the shelter, the sergeant finally came into the kitchen looking for "sweetheart," and nearly fell on his face to see the clerical collar! This embarrassing confrontation was offset by the basic good will between the two, and led to a serious discussion with the sergeant about MCC. This also served as a basis for plans, now being made, for meetings between the police force and church members about treatment of gay people in Providence.

The blizzard offered opportunities for special ministry for members of MCC Providence. The chance to serve, strengthened the community of the church itself, and helped create a link with the community around the church. It is often difficult for MCC congregations, given the prejudices of the community at large, to operate in the human services arena. Such giving, however, joins MCC members with all their brothers and sisters, and teaches that, through service, gay Christians affirm their part in the overall human condition.

Did some of the sheltered citizens of Providence come away with a different feeling about men and women who choose to be in same-sex relationships? We, at MCC Providence, believe they did, and we believe that in the funny, sad, frustrating, joyful, and exhausting days of the shelter we experienced yet another dimension of God's love.

Presbyterians Nix Gays

The United Presbyterian Church voted overwhelmingly May 22 to bar admitted and practising homosexuals from ordination to the ministry and church offices.

The vote came after nearly six hours of discussion and debate by 650 delegates in the Convention Center in San Diego, CA, site of the denomination's General Assembly.

The issue of the ordination of admitted homosexuals dominated the assembly's business, and a majority task force report -- two years in the making -- was overturned at the beginning of the assembly in favor of the adopted policy statement.

That task force report would have permitted qualified and practicing gays to be ordained.

The policy statement adopted said homosexual practice is a sin, and to ordain unrepentant, practicing gays is not in accord with either the church's constitution or scriptural teaching.

An article in the Los Angeles Times quoted a key passage from the resolution, stating: "For the church to ordain a self-affirming, practicing homosexual person to the ministry would be to act

in contradiction to its charter and calling in Scripture, setting in motion both within the church and in society, serious contradictions to the will of Christ."

Gays, however, were not barred from church membership: "There is room in the church for all who give honest affirmation to the vows required for membership . . . homosexual persons who sincerely affirm 'Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior' and 'I intend to be His disciple, to obey His Word, and to show His love' should not be excluded from membership."

Some delegates expressed a fear that the policy adopted would institute a 'witch hunt' against gays in the church. The Rev. Thomas Gillespie, who chaired the drafting committee of the statement was quoted in the Los Angeles Times as saying "there are no witches among us. There are only people, who, like ourselves, are caught in the brokenness of human life in a sinful world."

He went on to state that the policy clearly defines homophobia, as well as homosexuality, as a sin. He added that the report simply concluded that the church may not condone a practice which God seeks to redeem.

According to the policy, a gay who does not engage in homosexual acts could still be ordained.

The May 22 vote, in effect, reversed a controversial and much-publicized task force report in which the majority opinion recommended that presbyteries (regional units of the 2.6 million member denomination) be allowed to decide for themselves whether practicing gays should be ordained to church office.

That task force report was submitted as a substitute policy statement during floor debate but was rejected by a 10 - 1 margin.

The mood of the General Assembly was one of realizing the need to make a decisive statement on the issue of homosexuality. The statement started by asking: "Should the General Assembly foster the creation of a new situation in the church in which practicing homosexual persons would be free to affirm their life-style publicly . . . and to obtain the church's blessing upon this through ordination?" The statement answered its own question with a resounding 'no', but did set the practice of homosexual behavior within a "larger catalogue of sins . . . . pride, greed, jealousy, disobedience to parents and deceit . . . homosexuality is no greater a sin and no less a sin than these," the statement said.

If the United Presbyterians had voted to allow the ordination of gays, it would have been the first major church body in history to do so.

The statement adopted went on to say that "great care and love must be exercised" toward gays already in the church, "both those who have affirmed their sexual identity and practice and those who have in conscience chosen not to do so."

Regarding the examination of candidates for ordination the statement read: "It would be a hindrance to God's grace to make a specific inquiry into sexual orientation or practice . . . where the person involved has not taken the initiative in declaring his or her sexual orientation."

As a safeguard against possible 'witch hunts' the policy did include a statement saying that the actions of the report are not to be used retroactively against and United Presbyterian officer or minister.

According to the policy statement, the causes of homosexuality "now appear to be remarkably numerous and diverse. There is no one explanation for homosexual affectional preference . . ."

The policy also stated that "not all United Presbyterians can in conscience agree with our conclusions" and asked those of divergent opinions to remain within the church. †

newsnotes

The *Save Our Human Rights Foundation* of San Francisco, CA has hired David Palmer as special consultant to work on the development of a *National Sexual Minorities Switchboard* (NSMS). Palmer was the founder and former administrator of the National Runaway Switchboard in Chicago.

NSMS will focus on reaching people of all ages who are struggling with sexual identity or "coming out" issues and who are either geographically or socially isolated from existing resources. The phone service will operate a toll-free "800" number 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and will be staffed by more than 75 highly trained volunteers. Callers will receive clear and non-judgemental information about sexual minorities and their lifestyles, and will also be put in touch with appropriate resources in their local communities which are oriented toward sexual minorities. Palmer is targeting Fall 1978 for the opening of the NSMS.

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Deborah's Song

Sexism: 1 More View

BY CAROL CURETON

Sexism is a very complicated area of concern. I believe that in our churches, sexism is much more a theological question than one of women's liberation, though they are inter-related.

A very simplified way of looking at it is to think in terms of socially enforced stereotypes that limit and oppress people (both men and women). In our congregations we generally deal with the broad categories of "God" and "congregation members" when we discuss sexism.

Language is a reflection of our ideas and thoughts, and as such is often a key to both identifying the condition of sexism and to changing oppressive attitudes and conditions. We are often sexist with respect to God when we constantly and exclusively refer to God in male terms . . . . although we do not always consciously mean that God is "male", by virtue of the place that our language has in our lives we both consciously and unconsciously reinforce that image of God with our use of words.

Being non-sexist with reference to God means that we choose our words (and, of course, our corresponding thought patterns) to reflect an inclusive, non-limited, omnipotent being. By not refering to God as "male" we certainly do not mean to imply "femaleness" either. As human beings, we are limited to those two possibilities . . . God is not limited . . . except perhaps in our own minds.

As Christians, it is our responsibility to open the expansiveness and awesomeness of God to those around us. One of the primary ways to accomplish that is to build our mental images with words that reflect non-limiting rather than limiting concepts.

We are sexist with respect to others in our congregations when we constantly and exclusively refer to groups of people, both male and female, using only male references. Examples of this would be "Dear Brothers" when addressing all people.

We often hear the argument that "it really doesn't

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THE UFMCC CREDENTIALLING PROCESS MADE SIMPLE (OR CONDENSED A LITTLE)

When the Rev. Troy Perry began the first Metropolitan Community Church in 1968, he had no idea how large or how quickly the church would grow. During its formative years, when the need for additional clergy became apparent, credentialed ministers from other denominations were welcomed, with open arms, into the church, licensed, and sent out to begin new churches. Often, the licensing (or ordination) of these persons was completed without a thorough inquiry into their qualifications and references.

This type of credentialing was acceptable while the Fellowship was in its infancy, but it was soon apparent that the UFMCC must devise a process to review the capabilities, qualifications, and sincerity of prospective ministers.

For this reason, the Ministerial Credentials and Affairs Committee (MCAC) was established in 1970. The present committee is composed of nine ordained UFMCC ministers, appointed by the Board of Elders, and charged with the responsibility of reviewing all UFMCC ministerial candidates. It is divided into two, four-member subcommittees (Concerns and Standards), and is chaired by the Rev. Bob Cunningham, pastor of MCC Long Beach, CA.

Prior to General Conference in 1977, the MCAC completed its review of ministerial candidates prior to the first official business date of the corresponding General Conference. However, delegates at the '77 conference voted to change from an annual conference to a biennial one, necessitating changes in the licensing procedures.

The most significant change was the formation of District Review Committees (DRC) to deal with credentialing on the District level. The DRC for each district consists of three ministers appointed by the Board of Elders. These persons may not be members of the Board of Elders nor voting members of the MCAC. Members of the District Review Committees are ex-officio members of the MCAC, with voice but no vote. When possible, the members of the DRC are ministers who reside in the District and are ordained ministers. If a licensed minister is appointed to a DRC, her/his application for Re-License must be reviewed by the MCAC, not by the DRC.

In order to be considered by the DRC/MCAC for initial licensing, the ministerial candidate must meet the following basic requirements (meeting these requirements does not guarantee licensing):

1) Member in good standing of a local MCC for at least one year prior to meeting with the DRC. (Any exception must be authorized by the Board of Elders).

2) Licensed Exhorter of a local chartered MCC for at least six months prior to meeting with the DRC, or: a person holding ministerial credentials in another recognized denomination, who wishes to pursue the professional ministry in the Fellowship and has made those wishes known, in WRITING to the local District Coordinator and the Board of Elders at least six months prior to making application to the DRC for the UFMCC ministry.

3) A total of 60 credit hours (two academic years) in relevant subjects from an accepted college or bible school, or: two years concentrated training in a recognized seminary, or: four years of active lay or professional ministry in a recognized religious body, or: an acceptable combination of the preceding three items.

4) A written statement, no longer than one typed page, on the candidate's opinions and understanding of Fellowship goals and procedures.

5) A 10-20 page paper, double-spaced typewritten, on the candidate's statement of Christian Faith and statement of Call to the Christian Ministry. The DRC will read the paper and be prepared to discuss it with the candidate at the formal review during the designated District Conference.

6) Two book reviews on full-length publications related to spiritual growth, church administration, theology, or similar subjects AND a bibliography of books read within the past year with the candidate prepared to discuss these books.

ALL MINISTERIAL CANDIDATES IN THE TEN UFMCC DISTRICTS ADHERE TO THE PROCEDURES DESCRIBED BELOW:

INITIAL LICENSING

To begin the licensing process, the candidate first completes the application for Initial Licensing, Form B-006 (available from the UFMCC Church Services Department). The candidate then appears before the Board of Directors and Pastor of the local congregation to obtain their recommendations for licensing. The District Review Committee, which meets prior to the opening of the District Conference, then interviews the prospective minister, and decides whether or not the candidate is to be licensed. If a candidate fails to receive the recommendation for licensing from either the pastor, or Board of Directors, or *both*, that candidate may STILL appear before the DRC.

Candidates for licensing are evaluated on their involvement in their local MCC, their maturity, reliability in service, consistency in purpose, training and experience, and loyalty to the UFMCC, among others. Candidates holding credentials from other denominations must meet the same basic requirements and complete the same procedures as other prospective ministers. A UNANIMOUS VOTE of the DRC is required for initial licensing.

At the July/August meeting of the MCAC, the full committee: 1) receives the reports of the DRCs and 2) reports the results to the Clerk of the Board of Elders. Upon completion of these two steps, the Clerk issues licenses to all recognized UFMCC ministers. The license granted to approved candidates expires automatically after one year, and to continue in the UFMCC ministry, application for re-license must be made.

The decision of the DRC regarding candidates for initial licensing is FINAL. Candidates denied initial licensing MAY NOT appeal the decision of the DRC to the MCAC. Candidates

may, however, reapply for licensing the following year, repeating above procedures.

Candidates serving in an area of World Church Extension that has not been named a district (such as Great Britain) follow somewhat different procedures. The Coordinator of Church Extension (after consultations with other Pastors in his/her jurisdiction) recommends the licensing of the individual to the Board of Elders who consider the application and, as needed and qualifications warrant, may license the individual. This license is then reviewed by the MCAC at the time of the next meeting.

RE-LICENSING

Ministers seeking relicensing must process their application following the same procedures as for initial licensing (local church, to DRC, to MCAC). They must submit book reviews on two full-length publications related to spiritual growth, theology, church administration, or similar subjects; a bibliography of books read within the last year, and they must be prepared to discuss these works.

A decision of the DRC to relicense is final. The renewed license is issued by the Clerk of the Board of Elders after the MCAC receives the report of the DRC and reports it to the Clerk.

If the decision to relicense is NOT unanimous, or if it is a negative decision, the licensed minister may appeal that decision to the MCAC at their July/August meeting either in writing or in person. The request for appeal, however, must be made IN WRITING to the Chairperson of the MCAC at least TWO WEEKS prior to the meeting, or the appeal may not be considered. THE DECISION OF THE MCAC IS FINAL. THERE IS NO APPEAL TO THE BOARD OF ELDERS.

ORDINATION CANDIDACY AND ORDINATION

Ordination candidates must meet the following requirements to be considered by the MCAC:

1) Personal commitment to a full-time ministry in the Fellowship for the remainder of the candidate's professional life.

2) An active Licensed Minister in the Fellowship for at least one year. (Ordination should by no means be considered automatic after having served one year as a licensed minister.)

3) A total of 90 credit hours (three academic years) in relevant subjects from an accepted college or bible school, or: equivalent experience in the ministry and applicable professional fields, or: an acceptable combination of the preceding two items.

4) A 20-30 page thesis on a subject selected by the candidate and approved by the MCAC. The material is to be an original research work by the candidate and is to be typewritten with the original copy suitably bound for retention in the library of the Samaritan Theological Institute.

A minister who has been licensed for one year may submit an application for ordination candidacy to the DRC. If recommended by the DRC, the minister then submits the application, together with the title and proposed thesis topic, to the Chairperson of the MCAC, and requests an appointment with the MCAC interview team (three members of the MCAC - not to be confused with the District Review Committee). If the MCAC approves the thesis topic, the applicant is considered a *candidate* for ordination. The MCAC then appoints an advisor (member of the MCAC) who works with the candidate throughout the candidacy period, offering advise and counsel when necessary. During the ordination candidacy period, the minister submits any additional materials (transcripts, certificates, etc.) requested by the MCAC to update the candidate's application. The minister then works toward completion of the ordination thesis, which should be submitted to the Chairperson of the MCAC two months prior to the candidate's final interview.

The candidacy period usually lasts one year, but may be extended by the MCAC or the candidate. Upon completion of the candidacy period, a final interview is held by the MCAC, who may vote: 1) to approve the candidate for ordination, or 2) not approve the candidate for ordination, or 3) continue the candidacy period. THE DECISION OF THE MCAC IS FINAL.

Candidates for ordination are evaluated on their commitment to the ministry, proven leadership abilities (spiritual and administrative), proven dedication and loyalty to the Fellowship, and personal example of Christian life, among other things.

Applicants residing in the District of Australasia must be recommended for ordination candidacy by the DRC, and must submit the proposed thesis topic and outline to the Chairperson of the MCAC for approval. If approved, the applicant is considered an ordination candidate. The MCAC conducts further business with the candidate by correspondence. When the candidate is ready for the final interview to determine whether ordination will be granted, the candidate may request to meet with the MCAC in person if that is feasible for the candidate. If not, the MCAC requests an interviewer(s) living in the general area of the candidate to meet with the candidate for the final interview. The MCAC supplies questions and/or general topic areas to be discussed with the candidate. This discussion is to be tape recorded and forwarded to the MCAC to consider at their yearly meeting which will be held in July/August.

Applicants residing in Great Britain and Western Europe must be recommended for ordination candidacy by the Church Extension Committee and by the Executive Secretary for World Church Extension (since there is no DRC). These applicants follow the same procedures outlined for applicants residing in Australasia. †

MCAC PROPOSES NEW REQUIREMENTS FOR UFMCC PROFESSIONAL MINISTERS

The Standards Subcommittee of the Ministerial Credentials and Affairs Committee has proposed new requirements for the professional ministry of the UFMCC. A preliminary working copy of these requirements has been sent to each church, and the MCAC welcomes ideas and comments regarding these *proposed* requirements.

In addition to provisions found in the UFMCC By-Laws, the candidate must satisfy these requirements to attain the following UFMCC ministerial positions:

EXHORTER

1) The candidate must be a member of a local UFMCC church body for a minimum of one year. *(Under the present standards, minimum membership is six months.)*

2) The candidate must complete Fellowship approved career and psychological testing (to be developed).

LICENSED MINISTER

1) Candidate must be a licensed Exhorter of a local chartered church for at least one year. *(Previously, this was six months.)*

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More on sexism

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matter, for people know that we are referring to everyone when we say brothers or men or mankind". Again, it is often helpful to remember that language is a reflection of our attitudes. If it really doesn't matter, then why don't we refer to everyone as "sisters" instead? Of course, we are not suggesting that we use "female" references to apply to heterogeneous groups, either! What we are suggesting is that we use references that are inclusive of the audience to which they are meant to apply.

Since language, or more specifically words, are used to reflect our ideas and can also be described as the building blocks out of which we form our conceptual ideas, we can oftne change people's thinking by changing first the words that they use.

It is really important to understand that when we refer to a heterogeneous group in terms of one gender only, we have in effect negated or assigned non-importance or non-status to the others. We experience this phenomenon in our lives as gay persons when we feel ourselves immersed in a society that refers only to "heterosexuality".

After years of constant and exclusive use of these references, those who are not heterosexual begin to assume, both consciously and sub-consciously, that they do not really exist . . .or at best, that they do not have the right to exist as peers who have equal intrinsic value and status before God and humankind.

Since we are proclaiming as our primary outreach a community that has been stripped of the basic human dignity shared by most others, it is doubly important that we do all that we possibly can to instill a good and healthy self-concept in our people. One of the most obvious ways that we can begin to do that is to choose our words carefully so that they reflect people's existence and intrinsic worth as creations of God. †

Credentials

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2) The candidate must earn a minimum of 60 units, accrued from academic and experiential qualifications. (A unit system has been devised assigning unit values to academic achievements and UFMCC service.) This ensures that preparation for the ministry includes both academic and experiential areas and is not exclusively drawn from the one or the other.

3) Candidates must pass proficiency examinations in the following four areas: 1) Bible, 2) UFMCC Polity, 3) Church History/Theology, and 4) Practical Theology.

4) Candidates must submit a paper of approximately five typewritten pages in length responding to the question, "How Can I Be A Christian and a Homosexual?"

5) A paper, at least 20 typewritten pages in length, on the candidate's Statement of Christian Faith and Statement of Call to the Christian Ministry, must be submitted. *(Under existing requirements, this statement is a minimum of 10 pages in length.)*

ORDAINED MINISTERS

1) Candidate must have served as a licensed minister for a minimum of one year prior to making application for ordination or ordination candidacy.

2) Candidates must accrue a minimum of 90 units to be approved for ordination. These units are accrued as specified under the unit system for Licensed Ministers.

These are only some of the proposed changes in the requirements for the professional ministry. Anyone wishing to obtain a copy of the report from the MCAC may order them by writing to:

UFMCC DEPARTMENT OF CHURCH SERVICES
POST OFFICE BOX 5570
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90055

Elder's message

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In order for us to lead people into a reconciliation with God, we must first live in reconciled union and relationship with God, even if that means that we must re-examine our traditional, hand-me-down ideas to do so.

We must remember that we can be examples and teachers only—we can not force or require others to accept. For us to do that is for us to cease reflecting God, for God never forces anyone. God only offers.

One of my favorite fantasy stories, *Lilith*, by George MacDonald, includes the tale of a man traveling in a strange land where reality and laws of nature are different from ours. The man is being escorted in this land by a raven who is the caretaker of a cemetery in which souls rest. As they walk through the cemetery the raven plunges his beak into the ground and withdraws a big red worm, wriggling to be free. The raven suddenly threw back his head and tossed the worm into the air. As suddenly as it was thrown upward, the worm began to spread great gorgeous red and black wings and flew off toward the sun. The man objected that worms are not the larvae of butterflies. 'If they are to fly', he exclaimed, 'they must first be changed into something else first!' As he was speaking they noticed in the sky a small cloud behind which a warm red glow colored the edges, as if with the light of sunset. Confused, the man questioned whether or not it could be sunset so early. 'No', said the raven, 'the red belongs to the worm who has just met the sun.'

The man was worried and said, 'but what if they don't fly off as new creatures. Would you have the air full of worms?'

Full of the wisdom of the years, the raven simply said, 'That's the business of a caretaker, lifting people up—if only the rest of the clergy understood as well!'

As a people called by God, part of our mission is to lift people so that they may encounter God. If lives are to be changed, we must leave that to the creature and the Creator. To trust in a God of love is to do no more!

I believe that is an inherent part of the gospel message, one that we are called to show through the living example of our relationship with God. Part revelation and part revolution, I believe our mission is to live in a 'strange land where reality and laws of nature are different from here.' That land, the Kingdom of God, will be one where love is returned for hatred, meekness for anger, and where genuine humility is a compelling reality.

As we continue to understand the implications of that new way of life in joyful union with God, some people, both clergy and laity, will leave. Some going because they are afraid of change, some because they have lost sight of our mission, and some because they do not perceive our mission to be real. Rather than allowing ourselves to pass judgment on the lives and motives of others, let us draw ourselves even closer to God so that we may reflect God in this as in all things. If lives need to be changed, let's leave that to the creature and the creator. To trust in a God of love is to do no more.

The Kingdom of God will come, with us or without us—how exciting it is to be given the opportunity to be a part of the process.

What's happening in this Fellowship? The Spirit of God is moving. Shalom. . . †

UFMCC DEPARTMENT OF PUBLICATIONS

SURVEY OF *IN UNITY* READERS

Dear Friends:

In order to make our publication *In Unity* a more effective resource material for our congregations, we require feedback from the readers. This survey is supplied to find out what type of magazine you, the readers, would like to have. Please complete the following survey as honestly as possible. You DO NOT have to sign this survey. We only want to know what you like about the magazine, as well as what you dislike, and we welcome any suggestions you may have to make *In Unity* a more valuable tool for our churches.

. . . . . .

I. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

1) I read *In Unity*: ( ) Each issue ( ) Never ( ) Occasionally ( ) "What's *In Unity*?"
2) Do you: ( ) Subscribe to *In Unity* ( ) Purchase from local MCC ( ) Other . . . . . .
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6) Local MCC affiliation *(optional)*: . . . . . .
7) List areas of involvement in MCC *(optional)*: . . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

II. REGARDING *IN UNITY*:

1) What section(s) do you enjoy most in *In Unity*? . . . . . .
2) What section(s) do you most dislike? . . . . . .
3) CHECK ANY OF THE FOLLOWING IDEAS YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE INCORPORATED AS MONTHLY FEATURES IN *IN UNITY*:

( ) Question and answer column dealing with daily Christian living
( ) Biographical profiles on UFMCC clergy
( ) Features on new trends in theology
( ) Book Reviews (both secular and religious)
( ) Newsnotes column
( ) Institutional Ministry column
( ) Music/Record Reviews (both secular and religious)
( ) Columns dealing with Church Management areas
( ) Other (please specify): . . . . . .
. . . . . .

4) If you were the Editor of *In Unity*, what changes would you make in format, story material, graphics, or other areas of production? What types of material would you like the magazine to provide for you? *(Remember that we can only determine what the readers want through CANDID feedback.)* . . . . . .
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If you need more room, feel free to use a separate sheet of paper to answer. The results of this survey will be used as guidelines in determining the future format of *In Unity*. ALL information obtained through this survey will be confidential, and will only be used for the above reasons. Thank you for your time and cooperation. Please send the completed surveys to:

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LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90055

The transsexual plight

continued from page 9

anyone be pushed into having surgery before they can be assured of some degree of acceptance as members of the opposite sex.

So the question emerges for M.C.C. — "Is the transsexual a homosexual"? Unenlightened people will automatically reply "yes" and, unfortunately, this includes many gays. This question must be answered "Yes" *and* "No." "Yes" if only the anatomy is considered; "No" if the psyche is given preference. Once again, the thought clearly emerges that what we call "sex" is of a very dubious nature and has no accurate scientific meaning. Between "male" and "female" sex is a continum with many, many in betweens. In a nutshell, we could say this:

The transvestite has a social "problem."

The transsexual has a gender "problem."

The homosexual has a sex "problem."

(If, indeed, the word "problem" is appropriate.)

The following was written some years back before sex-change surgery was accessible. It is the cry of those with a high degree of transsexualism who have been denied the right to be themselves:

> "Each day I live a lie. Mine is a life of deceit, for I am forced to wear a mask, to be an actor on a stage not of my own choice. I cannot do...cannot act as I would like or as I feel.
>
> "Yet I am not evil. I am not criminal.
>
> "I desire, in fact, to be good in the highest sense. I long to give, to help, to protect, to learn, to create, perhaps above all, to love...and be loved.
>
> "I look about me and see all that I cannot be and cannot do. My heart cries with pain like no other, for my deepest desires — to me, my most natural wishes — cannot be fulfilled. I am forced to be and act that which I am not.
>
> "Would that I were as other women are! Yet I am not a woman either in my body or in the life they lead. I AM a woman in my soul...in the deep recesses of my being, I am like them. Inside me, I am one of them. How can I be MORE in their likeness?
>
> "That is what I want, yearn for, seek more than anything. Now I live only incompletely. I am in a prison — the prison of my body, the prison of a society which does not understand.
>
> "Until I can become more like other women — if I ever can — I must live a lie, day after day. Physically I am a man; mentally and emotionally I am a woman. "I am a transsexual."

We in the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches dare not ignore the sad and lonely plight of thousands of transvestites and transsexuals who need our love and our understanding.

One unhappy transsexual, who was unable to procure surgery wrote to Dr. Benjamin:

> "Finally I have to give up my struggle. Now I just exist, waiting in misery for the moment to take leave of this earth in which I have been so miserable..."

Dr. Benjamin writes of another patient who, in error, was sent to a doctor unfamiliar with the subject for which the young person consulted him, that is, to receive estrogen injections. The patient wrote:

> "The doctor's attitude toward me was sullen and indignant, making me feel like some kind of terrible creature he did not care to be in the same room with..."

And another person, commenting on treatment by the medical profession, wrote:

> "...there was no loving hand out to guide me. It was more like a doubled-up fist."

There are thousands of closet transsexuals who need the ministry and outreach of M.C.C. Many of them have become misfits through their gender disorientation. Neither society, nor the law, nor the medical profession, nor the established church in particular, understands or acknowledges transsexualism as an underserved misfortune. Will we in M.C.C. *also* refuse to understand?

Troy Perry said:

> "We in the Metropolitan Community Churches must make up our minds that we are going to create a community of believers who CARE so much for each other that the world will think twice before they try to do any of us any harm. An army of lovers will never be defeated."

May our love be as God's — inclusive — reaching out to ALL. †

MINISTERIAL CHANGES
(To May 31, 1978)

Bernier, the Rev. Laurence: From Director of Publications (UFMCC), and Asst. Pastor, All Saints MCC, West Hollywood, CA to: resigned from ministry.

Bigelow, the Rev. Tom: From Pastor, MCC Nashville, TN to Pastor, MCC Atlanta, GA.

Bouchard, the Rev. Valerie: From Interim Pastor, Good Shepherd MCC, Chicago, IL to: available for call.

Carden, the Rev. David: From New Freedom Evangelistic Team to: Asst. Pastor, MCC Jacksonville, FL.

Davis, the Rev. Keith: From unassigned to: Interim Pastor, Trinity MCC, Riverside, CA.

Deacon, the Rev. Jay: from Pastor, MCC Hartford, CT, to: Pastor, MCC Chicago, IL. (Effective 8/1/78).

Gendron, the Rev. Debbie: From Pastor, Trinity MCC, Riverside, CA to: Worship Coordinator, Palm Springs, CA.

Hamilton, the Rev. Shelley: From Asst. Pastor, MCC New York, to: Interim Pastor, MCC Worcester, MA.

Harvey, the Rev. Jeri: From available for call to: Pastor, MCC Los Angeles, CA.

Hein, the Rev. Renee: From available for call to: Asst. Pastor, MCC Adelaide, Australia.

Hill, the Rev. Randall: from Pastor, MCC Knoxville, TN, to: Pastor, MCC Sarasota, FL.

Maduka, the Rev. Sylvanus: From Pastor, MCC Zaria, Nigeria to: Pastor, Ezinachi, Okigwe, Imo State, Nigeria.

Pederson, the Rev. Donald: resigned from ministry.

Schmidt, the Rev. Earl: resigned from ministry.

Taylor, the Rev. Tom: From Asst. Pastor, MCC Sacramento, CA , to: available for call.

Thomas, the Rev. Jay: From Asst. Pastor, MCC Cincinnati, OH to: resigned from ministry.

CORRECTIONS FROM PREVIOUS LISTING

Daniel, the Rev. Bonnie: From unassigned to: Minister-in-Residence, MCC Pomona Valley, CA.

Dodds, the Rev. Kris: From Pastor, MCC Albuquerque, NM, to: Minister-in-Residence, MCC Pomona Valley, CA.

MINISTERS AVAILABLE FOR CALL

The Rev. John Ayres: c/o Post Office Box 818, Sarasota, FL, 33578.

The Rev. Jim Beers: 10 Deal Lake Court, Asbury Park, NJ, 07712.

The Rev. Valerie Bouchard: c/o Post Office Box 2392, Chicago, IL, 60690.

The Rev. Keith Davis: c/o 699 Rialto Ave., San Bernadino, CA, 92410.

The Rev. Kris Dodds: c/o Post Office Box 1002, Upland, CA, 91786.

The Rev. Michael England: c/o 945 "G" St., NW, Washington, D.C., 20001.

The Rev. Buff Fisher: c/o Post Office Box 27628, Tucson, AZ, 85726.

The Rev. Jerry Sloan: 6419 East 12th Street, Kansas City, MO, 64126.

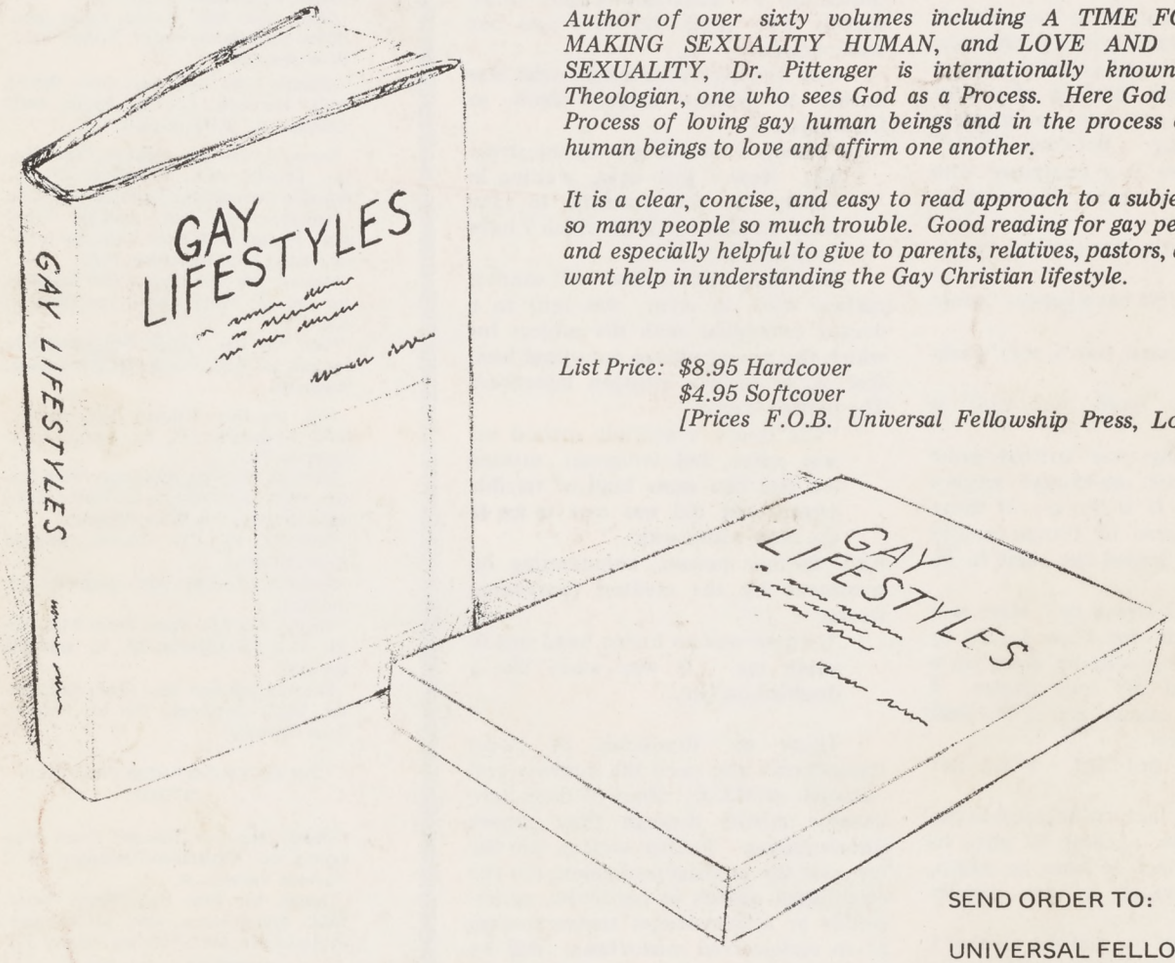
The Rev. Jane Taylor: c/o UFMCC, POB 5570, Los Angeles, CA, 90055.

The Rev. Tom Taylor: c/o UFMCC, POB 5570, Los Angeles, CA, 90055.

GAY LIFESTYLES

GAY LIFESTYLES: A Christian Interpretation of Homosexuality and the Homosexual

by THE REVEREND DR. NORMAN PITTENGER



Author of over sixty volumes including A TIME FOR CONSENT, MAKING SEXUALITY HUMAN, and LOVE AND CONTROL IN SEXUALITY, Dr. Pittenger is internationally known as a Process Theologian, one who sees God as a Process. Here God is clearly in the Process of loving gay human beings and in the process of teaching gay human beings to love and affirm one another.

It is a clear, concise, and easy to read approach to a subject which causes so many people so much trouble. Good reading for gay people themselves and especially helpful to give to parents, relatives, pastors, and friends who want help in understanding the Gay Christian lifestyle.

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